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STANHOPE A. FORBES, A.R.A.,
AND
ELIZABETH STANHOPE FORBES,
A.R.W.S.

UNIFORM WITH THIS WORK.

SIR LAWRENCE ALMA-
TADEMA, O.M., R.A.

By PERCY CROSS STANDING.

With Four Reproductions in Colour and
Numerous Plates in Black and White.

HENRIETTA RAE

(Mrs. Ernest Normand).

By ARTHUR FISH.

With Eight Reproductions in Colour and
Numerous Plates in Black and White.

CASELL AND COMPANY, LIMITED, London.
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THE SLIP.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of J. L. Laird, Esq.

STANHOPE A. FORBES,
A.R.A., AND
ELIZABETH STANHOPE
FORBES, A.R.W.S.

BY
MRS. LIONEL BIRCH

*WITH EIGHT REPRODUCTIONS IN COLOUR
AND THIRTY-TWO OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS*

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STANHOPE AND ELIZABETH FORBES.

CHAPTER I.

STANHOPE FORBES : EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

WITHIN the tranquil setting of a western bay, where, past granite cliffs and wild moorland and pleasant fields of ripening grain, that wilder outlying ocean which rolls in above the lost lands of Lyonesse has hollowed out for itself a cup, the primary industry of the coast, which deals with the harvest of the sea, has caused a quaint irregular gathering of slate-roofed houses to mass themselves together. They rise sharply from the piers which give shelter to the small coasting steamers with their gaily painted funnels, and there lie the East-country trawlers, with their tawny and parti-coloured sails spread to the sun, and all the varied fishing craft of a busy little harbour. The houses, closely packed at first, straggle up the cliff—more happily set in gay gardens and blossoming orchards the higher they go—till the heights above are reached, where a wide and glorious outlook dominates the curving bay, sweeping in from the Lizard light, past the Marconi signal towers to the good grey

town of Penzance, this last curiously etherealised and jewel-set when the necklace of its parade lamps gleams out in the twilight, edging an opal sea."

Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes wrote this description of the place which is her home, and it reveals how this bit of world strikes an artist's eye.

It is here that some years ago several students from Paris and Antwerp *ateliers* gathered on their return to their native land ; and of a few of these it may be said that they have contributed not inconsiderably to the world's work.

Very much might be said of some of these who by force of circumstances have been withdrawn from the little colony into other fields of achievement, and to whom Mr. Forbes makes affectionate allusion in his written reminiscences, which we will quote later on. Some are still sending forth from this Western-most land good and varied work ; but at present we are mostly concerned with two who are devoting what they have of energy and enthusiasm to the task of developing in diverse ways all the artistic possibilities of one little corner of a beautiful world.

Stanhope Forbes was born in Dublin in the year 1857. His father, Mr. William Forbes, then manager of an Irish railway, was a man of cultivated literary tastes, an enthusiastic admirer of Dickens and Thackeray, but more especially of Carlyle. One who knew him well has thus written of him :—

" Among many of the older Cornish folk in the countryside where his son has made his home, there lingers a pleasant memory of

William Forbes. 'A kind gentleman, merry and pleasant spoken,' said an old woman the other day; and some seventeen years ago, when his was a well-known figure on the cliff at Newlyn, many were the greetings given and exchanged between the old fishermen and the women, remembered from year to year, and the kindly gentleman, proud of his son's artistic triumphs, and with a sympathetic or humorous word for all.

"He was a man beloved of little children and of all animals; with a keen and healthy perception of all things droll or pathetic in life or literature. It is told of him that, as a lad, every penny that could be spared from his earnings went towards first editions of his favourite writers. A philosophical kindliness distinguished his attitude towards his surroundings. In the course of his career as a manager of railways in the west of Ireland and in Belgium, he had gathered among the peasantry a fund of stories which he loved to tell with infinite drollery."

Early in life William Forbes was fortunate in making the acquaintance of a bright and vivacious young French lady, Mademoiselle Juliette de Guise, whom he subsequently married; and to-day she is still, happily, as she has always been, the devoted friend and genial companion of her sons.

From such a father we may imagine that young Stanhope received a large measure of sympathy in his artistic leanings.

It was while Mr. and Mrs. William Forbes were living in Dublin that an incident occurred which very nearly put an end to the future painter's career.

When between five and six years of age he one day accompanied his parents on a visit to some of the men-o'-war—the old “wooden walls” of those days—which were lying at anchor in Dublin Bay. As the party were leaving *H.M.S. Resistance*, and were descending the ship's side, the little Stanhope, restless no doubt with excitement and pleasure, contrived in some way to slip from the arms of the sailor who was carrying him. To the horror of his father and mother he fell between ship and boat into the sea, and they saw the curly yellow head disappear in the swirl of the deep green water. No time was lost in going to the rescue, and one of the sailors brought the unconscious child to shore.

At first it seemed as if he had suffered no serious injury, but a gastric fever which declared itself soon after was traceable by the doctors to the shock of the immersion reacting on the little boy's sensitive organisation. And not improbably the accident laid the seeds of a delicacy of constitution which would have seriously handicapped the life's work of a man possessed of less will power and strenuous determination.

Stanhope Forbes and his elder brother William, the well-known manager of the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway, were in their early years taught by Miss Sophie Moran, for whom both they and their parents entertained a great affection. She was much attached to her small charges, and used to take them with her on prolonged visits to her father, the Vicar of Kilcolgan in Galway. He was a delightful type of sporting Irish parson, as keen and earnest in his

favourite pursuits as in the more serious business of life.

The recollection is still fresh in the two mens' minds of those happy visits, and of their keen appreciation of the freedom and unconventionality of that Irish home.

The wild, beautiful scenery of Galway is a factor easily traceable in the mental development of Stanhope Forbes, and in later visits, when the child had become a boy, the old Vicar, an ardent fisherman, imbued him with his own enthusiasm for a sport which above all others induces contemplation of Nature, and which retains to this day its magic for the boy grown to manhood.

But, alas! these later visits found the old man fallen on rather evil times, for his arch-enemy, Mr. Gladstone, had accomplished his work of Disestablishment, and the large congregation of former times had dwindled to a mere handful of faithful adherents. The Vicar, too, was feeling more and more the infirmity of years. But indomitable in spirit, though crippled by gout, he taught his young friend fly fishing from a Bath chair! With good results too, for it was not long before his pupil made a triumphal entry into the study and flung a large salmon flapping on the table. Any fisherman will picture the pride of the old man and the state of mind of the boy when that same unwilling prey yielded to a novice's art, and when he clattered along, clutching the slippery prize, anticipating the exhibition of it to his old friend as the crowning of his achievement!

To Miss Moran's teaching succeeded education at a public school; and Mr. and Mrs.

William Forbes having moved to London, Dulwich College was chosen. There the artistic side of his nature found ample scope in the enlightened teaching of the art master, Mr. John Sparkes, afterwards the well-known head master of the South Kensington School of Art, who conducted his branch of teaching on lines very different from those of other schools.

Many painters prefer that their children should not attend the drawing classes at school, knowing the deadening effect of the dry routine on awakening talent. But Mr. Sparkes substituted to the mindless copying elsewhere enforced, drawing from casts of such statues as the "Discobolus" and the "Fighting Gladiator." These splendid forms were a joy to the future artist, and he was frequently missing at playtime, having stolen up to the cast room to lose himself in his absorbing work. Not even that most tyrannous force, the schoolboy appetite, sufficed always to tear him from the occupation that was his chief happiness at school.

It was during holidays spent in the Ardennes, when the child had reached his eleventh year, that the family first made the acquaintance of three ladies, the Misses Harrison, whose influence went for a good deal in shaping the boy's future. These ladies were on a sketching tour. One of them, Miss Maria, was for many years a member of the Old Water Colour Society, and although she had for some time ceased to be an exhibitor, lived until the year 1904. They seem to have taken much notice of the eager little boy, and to have encouraged him to join them in their sketching expeditions. Some of these first drawings

of the old Château and village of Rochefort are still extant, and not long ago the painter, this time with his wife and son, found himself again at Rochefort, climbing the worn path through the apple orchards to the old Château and, in the yellow light of a rainy sunset, looking across the valley to the low wooded hills he had once tried to delineate—memory bridging the gap of thirty-three years of endeavour.

The friendship with the Misses Harrison proved a lasting one, these ladies on their return home continuing to take an interest in the boy's progress. All his earliest efforts were carried round to Gloucester Gardens, where his good friends lived, to be inspected and criticised. Always sure of sympathy and encouragement, the lad looked forward with the greatest pleasure to these visits.

Later on they invited him to accompany them on another sketching tour, and Berwick-on-Tweed and Edinburgh were visited and countless drawings and sketches made under their direction, and the lad's keenness for art was fostered and strengthened. Great was their delight when it was definitely decided that he was to be allowed to follow his bent; and throughout his career the same warm-hearted sympathy followed his progress and took pride in his earliest successes.

The boy's passion for pictures was certainly an inherited one. He ever holds in affectionate remembrance the name of an uncle, his father's younger brother, Alexander Forbes, who died at a comparatively early age. His house, where gathered a merry company of young cousins, had ever been a second home to Stanhope and his brother,

and there the lad, making his first essays in painting, found intelligent encouragement and criticism. The enthusiasm which his elder uncle, James Staats Forbes, the friend of Israels, and of most of the famous contemporary painters of Holland, put into the making of his superb collection of pictures, is too well known to need comment.

The virility of this family strain, with its men keen in business affairs, quick to grasp the flying opportunity, men of strong emotions and enthusiasms, found still another manifestation in the person of the young scientist and explorer, W. Alexander Forbes, son of James Staats Forbes, of whom Sir Harry Johnston has said, "His death was one of the greatest losses British science has sustained."

In his short career (for he died at the early age of twenty-eight) he had already won a distinguished position, both at the University and as Prosector to the Royal Zoological Society. He perished of fever on one of the far reaches of the Niger in the month of January, 1883.

The appointment of Mr. William Forbes as manager of the Great Luxembourg Railway, at that time under the administration of an English company, took the family to Brussels, the two lads remaining at school at Dulwich College and spending their holidays in the pleasant Belgian capital. Stanhope's health, however, not being satisfactory, his parents decided after a little while to take him from school so as to allow him to work under their immediate superintendence, and for a year or more he studied with tutors in Brussels and was able to give more time to his drawing



STANHOPE A. FORBES, A.R.A.

Charcoal Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

than the ordinary routine of school life had allowed.

These were the dark days of the Franco-German War, and the echo of that great conflict could almost be heard in Belgium. The Luxembourg Railway, with which his father was connected, led that district of Belgium which lay closest to the great battle-fields where the fearful strife was being waged ; and, though in neutral territory, the officials of the railway were kept on the *qui vive* of anxiety, scarce knowing from day to day whether this awful human conflagration would spread and extend over that frontier line which lay so perilously close at hand. When all was over, and peace once more reigned, the boys accompanied their father on a trip down his line and saw what havoc had been done. They spent a day in a frontier town—that of Longwy—which had been shattered by shells and reduced by assault, and which, in that period immediately following the proclamation of peace, still remained in the possession of the conquering Germans. It made a never-to-be-forgotten impression on the lad's mind, this glimpse of a city fresh from the horrors of siege, the great central square piled up with cannon, its buildings in ruins, and everywhere the arrogant Bavarian officers and soldiers, holding themselves aloof from the inhabitants forced to tolerate their hateful presence.

The purchase by the State of the Luxembourg Railway brought Mr. Forbes' occupation in Brussels to an end, and London became once more the home of the family. It was now that the question of Stanhope Forbes' future

career arose : his talent for painting had so clearly shown itself that no one could ignore its possibilities. Friends called into council were of the opinion that an artistic career was too precarious and uncertain, but that the leisure left him by some other profession bringing steadier returns might be employed in his favourite pursuit.

In this view William Forbes by no means concurred. Though not an artist himself, he realised the exacting claims of art and the folly of setting them in conflict with other claims. He no doubt felt that in some more obviously useful profession his youngest son might possibly rise to wealth, and so, in a superficial sense, add more to the world's gains. But art weighed in the balance against utility was on this occasion not found wanting, and thereby a treasure of pictorial work has been given to the world, fulfilling a need of these times.

Leopardi, the Italian poet philosopher, cried of this generation, "Fool ! which demands the Useful, and perceives not how useless Life itself thereby becomes." Such short-sighted demand was not the quarryman's, who saved up scarce shillings a few years ago to buy an engraving of Stanhope Forbes' "A Quarry Team," a costly thing for him, the price whereof would have bought a new mangle at least or a better kitchen range. His own life appeared better to him when he saw an aspect of it imaged in another mind, with no false glamour of the picturesque, but with a steady faithfulness which lost for him no touch of the poetry which broods latent in large aspects of forceful life. By that time Stanhope Forbes

had taken his place in our Art history as a Teller of Truths: reproached indeed by adverse critics for his absolute realism.

The final decision regarding Stanhope Forbes' career was not arrived at till after his father had sought the advice of Mr. Sparkes (at this time master at the Lambeth School of Art), the boy's helpful friend of Dulwich days. Having looked over a portfolio of the Belgian studies, Mr. Sparkes advised that the boy be permitted to follow his vocation.

Mr. William Forbes, always anxious to gratify his son's wishes and sympathising thoroughly with his love of art, decided to let him compete for entrance to the Academy Schools.

The necessary drawings were made at the Lambeth School of Art, and it was there that Stanhope Forbes made the acquaintance of a fellow student whose career, for some time running on parallel lines, after a while diverged into far other channels. Harry Johnston, a clever and promising lad, was also working with a view to entering the Academy Schools, and evinced even then that ardour for natural history and adventurous travel which later led him to desert the paths of art to achieve fame as the explorer and founder of British Central Africa. The young men became close friends. In years to come, Sir Harry Johnston was to return from fruitful travels to find his early friend an Associate of that Academy in whose Schools they had worked side by side.

At the Academy Schools Stanhope Forbes came under the influence of some of the most distinguished painters of the day, for there

a system obtains by which a different master, or visitor, as he is termed, exercises supervision each month, and among them at that time were Sir John Millais and Sir Frederic Leighton, who were later to become Presidents of the Royal Academy, and who then took an active part in the teaching and training of the students. Sir Lawrence Alma Tadema, too, was a frequent and very favourite instructor at the Schools, which then included among the students Solomon J. Solomon, Arthur Hacker, and H. H. La Thangue.

Stanhope Forbes flung himself wholeheartedly into his work and made rapid progress. For relaxation, he made excursions into the country, and, in response to an invitation, once journeyed to Galway to visit an old friend of his father, Dr. Andrew Melville. He was a Professor of Queen's College, and an authority on extinct types of animal life. Keenly interested in the arts, and possessing an extraordinarily retentive memory, a veritable storehouse of facts, he had, besides, a genuine gift of expression which made him an admirable conversationalist. From his travels in Italy he had brought back countless mementoes, reproductions of renowned pictures and drawings of famous buildings: artistic treasures strange to see in the wilds of Connemara, where, indeed, the Doctor found very few who understood or cared for such things. All this served to make Stanhope Forbes' visit of several months immensely pleasant to him, and profitable in enlarging his knowledge of the history of painting. To Dr. Melville, versed in the artistic lore of the Renaissance, the novel spirit just beginning to

inform the art tendencies of the time, was troubling; and its manifestation in his youthful friend puzzled, while it interested, him.

In the younger man, the feeling for fresh, strong realism flowed on towards development, a current uninfluenced by the Italian tradition. Nevertheless, these two natures so diverse found great pleasure in each other's society; and the old Scotch doctor's delight in the lad's achievements was great.

Released from the chalk and stumps of the Schools, Stanhope Forbes now revelled in outdoor painting. Looking about for a model his choice fell on the lodge-keeper's wife, a type of handsome Irishwoman, and he painted away with enthusiasm. It is always interesting to note how diversely the Beautiful strikes the human vision. The lodge-keeper, watching the lad at work, asked him why he wanted to paint Norah.

"Because she is very handsome," was the reply.

"Is she now?" queried the lord and master of Norah. "Handsome? Is she, raly?"

"Why, yes," affirmed the painter, as he worked; "don't you think so?"

"'Deed, and I never thought about it," said the man, adding reflectively, "I dare say she is!"

This little incident, though comic, is in a way significant of the part to be played by the art of Stanhope Forbes.

On one occasion, the Viceregal party, visiting the Queen's College, were conducted through the Museum of Natural History by the Doctor, whose special charge it was. He had arranged

somewhat of a surprise for the then Lord Lieutenant, the Duke of Marlborough, for amongst the stuffed animals and the fossil relics of past ages, a breath of the palpitating present emanated from some fresh and vigorous sketches grouped together by the Doctor's care. It speaks a great deal for the kindness of Dr. Melville and his pride in his young guest that, not too absorbed in displaying results of his own labours, he had bethought him of thus exhibiting the artist's work to his distinguished visitors. This and other incidents brought that work into notice amongst the people of that district, and shortly afterwards Stanhope Forbes received his first commission. It was for a portrait. He accepted it with diffidence, but carried it out so successfully that other commissions speedily followed. Those who have seen these early works say that they are painted quite on the lines of the artist's subsequent development.

Encouraged by the success of his Irish experiences and having through the training of the Academy Schools perfected to some degree his technique, he now attempted several portrait studies in London, notably one of the daughter of a well-known surgeon living in Harley Street. Painted in a room in this somewhat grim thoroughfare, this able presentment of a charming model was accepted for exhibition by the Royal Academy, and well placed. This picture, exhibited in 1879, was the first of Stanhope Forbes' almost unbroken series of contributions to the Royal Academy since that date. It was entitled "Florence," and, attracting some notice, it brought him other work, for during the course

of the exhibition the painter was asked to undertake a commission for two pictures in Bedfordshire. He was but eighteen, and many years afterwards the lady who thus commissioned him told him of her bewilderment when a slim and timid boy presented himself in place of the middle-aged individual the work in the Royal Academy had led her to expect.

These, and other early successes in one branch of art, seemed to point to his adopting portraiture solely and definitely. But the Destiny which shapes our ends began then drawing him towards a course which was completely to alter the direction of his life's work.

CHAPTER II.

STANHOPE FORBES : STUDY IN PARIS AND BRITTANY.

AMONG the art students in England about this time rumours were current of great things being done in the studios across the water. A strong desire was felt to widen their knowledge of art training and to become acquainted with foreign methods.

With his friend, Arthur Hacker, then a fellow student at the Royal Academy, Stanhope Forbes decided to enter one of these much-vaunted Parisian *ateliers*, and chose that of the celebrated French portrait painter, M. Bonnat, which at that time enjoyed a great reputation, and was much in vogue. In this *atelier* at Clichy he worked for some considerable time, enjoying all the delight and careless happiness of student life in the great art capital of the world. He ever bears in grateful recollection those days when he first experienced that warm-hearted hospitality which the French nation extends to the artists and the art of all other lands. With a generous liberality France then, as now, threw open her galleries and her studios to the painters and students of other countries. Even at the official school of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, foreigners were to be found working in great numbers, and at such private *ateliers* as those of Julien or Bonnat the

admixture of nationalities was most remarkable and noticeable. Stanhope Forbes found himself working side by side with young students from far-away lands, and saw practised methods and systems of painting as varied as the races from which they emanated. Keen young Americans there were, intent on their work, who had toiled hard to scrape together the necessary dollars to pay the passage over, and who, living on an indescribably small pittance, yet were buoyed up by enthusiasm and a strong determination to succeed; others of their compatriots more fortunately placed, yet fully as keen and eager to excel; fair-haired Danes and Swedes, with art instincts strongly typical of their Scandinavian origin, contrasting markedly with the dark-skinned students from the Midi; the Professor's own compatriots from Bayonne and the Basque country, who naturally flocked to the *atelier* of their great fellow-countryman; and even the Far East sent its votaries to the shrine. Stanhope Forbes remembers the advent of a young Japanese artist, who, greatly to the disappointment of the European students, anxious to see him produce work characteristic of his most interesting country, with the extraordinary adaptability of his race proceeded to adopt, before a very few weeks every trick, and mannerism of French art methods.

Amongst surroundings such as these Stanhope Forbes doubtless learnt much from comparing the varying styles and interchanging ideas with fellow students whose outlook differed so greatly from his own. He worked diligently in the customary and approved

methods, yet keeping an open mind and preserving his own individual art instincts; for there was commencing to grow within him a feeling, as it were, of revolt against these Academic methods and traditions.

It was, perhaps, very natural that months of hard work in the heated and exhausting atmosphere of a Parisian *atelier* should breed an intense longing for the open air, for sunshine and light. Other causes, too, were combining to shape the trend of his future career and point out the direction in which his life's work should ultimately find its fullest expression. Outside the school work, his general art education was being enlarged by this stay in the French capital where the glories of the Louvre were revealed to him. And perhaps even more sympathetic to a young painter was the modern collection at the Luxembourg, where so many of the best products of French art could be studied. These things powerfully affected him, and the annual great exhibition at the Salon gave him an unequalled opportunity of studying contemporary art. At that exhibition the same broad-minded spirit obtained, and the doors were thrown open to the painters and sculptors of all lands. It was on the walls of the first Salon he saw that he learnt to admire and appreciate the work of a young French painter of whom he has always been a constant admirer. Jules Bastien-Lepage, whose untimely death occurred not very many years after this date, was then exhibiting some of those masterpieces of realistic art which quickly won for him a great reputation. Not long before, himself a student at the Beaux Arts,

where his brilliant achievements were still the talk of the students, he had diverged from the path of Academic painting which had won for him much honour, and, setting up his easel in the fields and orchards of his own native district, had painted with curious fidelity the life of the peasants at their daily toil.

Hanging side by side in the Salon, with work of so different a quality, the aim and intention of such pictures as "Les Foins" and the "Joan of Arc" appealed strongly to many an art student of that day. Their unflinching realism, not the least striking feature of which was their absolute fidelity to effects of open air, highly attracted the young English painter and quickened his own impulse towards the study of those effects in which he has since taken such keen delight. Stanhope Forbes saw that here was a painter, the keynote to whose talent was unaffected truth without false glamour or meretricious charm, and felt powerfully drawn towards an art deriving its inspiration so directly and closely from nature.

It was but natural that, eager to escape from the monotonous routine of studio work, and with an intense longing to follow these fast-growing instincts, his thoughts should have turned towards Brittany. In that most beautiful and interesting portion of France, there seemed to be found everything that an artist could desire. Inhabited by a race of a distinct and marked type, wearing still the beautiful national costumes which had been handed down from bygone ages, and retaining the old language of their forefathers, each village followed religiously the old traditions which

ordered the fashion of their dress and the conduct of their lives. Here was a country dear to all who love that which is old and quaint, time-honoured, and reminiscent of past ages. In the studios the praises of Brittany were loudly sung, and it was upon the advice of a comrade of the *atelier* Bonnat that one memorable evening he and his friend H. H. La Thangue took the train from the Gare Mont Parnasse, and after a long and weary night of travelling found themselves in the quaint old town of St. Malo.

H. H. La Thangue had from boyhood been amongst Stanhope Forbes' closest friends, had worked side by side with him at Lambeth as well as the Academy Schools. He had crossed over to Paris about the same time that his two comrades, Forbes and Hacker, entered the Bonnat *atelier*; but, preferring to join the Schools of the Beaux Arts, had become a pupil of M. Gérôme and worked and resided in the Quartier Latin. A friendly interchange of visits was frequent between the three former Academy students, and each upheld the virtue and merits of their respective studio and professor.

La Thangue more than shared his friend's enthusiasm for out-of-door work, and, indeed, greatly spurred him on in his determination to escape from Academic tradition. He arranged to accompany him to Brittany, and to spend the summer months there in out-of-door painting. Stanhope Forbes counts himself as fortunate in having had as an early associate and comrade one whose fine and healthy art instincts have since borne such good fruit.

After searching the district round St. Malo, the two friends hit upon a small village lying upon the shores of the Bay of Mont St. Michel. It is somewhat strange that in this, his first experiment in outdoor painting, he should have stumbled on a place which was in many ways a counterpart of that little Cornish village where many years later on he was to find his home and carry out the greater part of his life's work.

Here, at Cancale, with La Thangue, he worked during the summer of 1880. The two young English painters rivalled each other in their keen observance of those principles which were beginning to be their articles of belief.

To paint the picture entirely and absolutely out of doors, braving all difficulties, and relying in no way upon sketches or studies, with which, later on, the work could be comfortably finished within the walls of a studio—such was the creed to which they pledged themselves. Nature was to be respected and followed without question: to be blindly obeyed. Models might grumble and dislike having to sit in the street under the very eyes of the whole village; but the cult demanded it, and its exponents gave an example of self-sacrifice, for they spared themselves no trouble, and worked out their principles with admirable conscientiousness. On one occasion its strict observance well-nigh brought about a dire catastrophe, for, anxious to study the exact tones of a girl's figure against a background of grey slate roofs, the model was induced to sit in rather too near proximity to the edge of a steep cliff. In an unguarded moment she slipped and fell over, and Stanhope Forbes

even now shudders to recall that moment when, with the village folk who had rushed out at the cry of distress clustering round, he leaned over the prostrate form of the girl, to find to his infinite relief that she had miraculously escaped without serious injury.

One of the first results of the visit to Cancale was a composition of figures in a narrow street: women in white *coiffes* and blue petticoats, grouped round their cottages and seated on their doorsteps engaged in their everlasting occupation of knitting blue jerseys for their fisher husbands. It was a very simple *motif*, but painted with great care and conscientiousness, and with a close and searching attention to those truths of lighting and that clear out-of-door aspect which the painter sought to betray. It was interesting, too, as the first attempt Stanhope Forbes had made in what might be termed figure composition, if, indeed, a picture in which there is so little of arrangement in the grouping of the figures can be termed a composition. But it was, at any rate, a great step from simple portraiture, and its success—for it brought the young painter a very signal one—had the most marked influence in determining his future. Exhibited at the Royal Academy of 1881, it attracted favourable attention, and when, later on, it was sent to Liverpool, the Committee of the Walker Art Gallery decided to purchase it for their permanent collection.

The next year found him once more in Brittany, though in another and more characteristically Breton district. It was at Quimperlé, the quaint and interesting old town of Finistère, that he once more joined his friend,



THE CONVENT.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of J. Maddocks, Esq.

La Thangue. Here for two summers he painted, producing, amongst other works, a composition of almost life-size figures painted in full sunshine, called "Preparations for the Market," which has since found a home in Dunedin. The interesting little church hard by the town, and known as St. David's, took his fancy, and a careful presentment of this slated old tower found its way to the Academy of 1882, where its quiet grey tones were favourably commented on. In a brighter vein is "The Convent," also a product of the Quimperlé visit. This picture is now the property of Mr. J. Maddocks, one of the heartiest appreciators of the younger school of English painters. The white walls of the little convent building reflected in the smooth river flowing by its gates, made a bright and cheerful note of colour; and this picture, together with other work of Stanhope Forbes, exhibited in two successive Academy Exhibitions, found a certain meed of favour in the eyes of the critics of those days. The curiously high-pitched key in which these works were painted, and the frank look they bore of their open-air origin, made this series of Breton works noticeable in English exhibitions.

But in spite of their success, the painter began to find that a tendency in his work towards cold blue tones was perhaps being aggravated and encouraged by the invariable and somewhat monotonous colour of the Breton costume. Fearing to be led into an obvious mannerism, he came to the conclusion that a change of scene might be of advantage to his art and give him a fresh outlook.

The transition from Brittany to Cornwall

was not an abrupt one, for there is much in common between these two countries; and Stanhope Forbes fell in very easily with the suggestion of an old friend who was contemplating a trip to the Duchy, and early in 1884 started from London with the intention of spending a few months in the district by the Land's End.

CHAPTER III.

STANHOPE FORBES : NEWLYN.

IN an article entitled "A Newlyn Retrospect," written for an interesting but too short-lived periodical, *The Cornish Magazine*, of which Mr. A. T. Quiller-Couch—that brilliant writer and good Cornishman—was editor, Mr. Stanhope Forbes thus tells of his first entry into the village which he and his friends were to render famous.

"I had come from France and, wandering down into Cornwall, came one spring morning along that dusty road by which Newlyn is approached from Penzance. Little did I think that the cluster of grey-roofed houses which I saw before me against the hillside would be my home for so many years.

"What lodestone of artistic metal the place contains I know not ; but its effects were strongly felt in the studios of Paris and Antwerp particularly, by a number of young English painters studying there, who just about then, by some common impulse, seemed drawn towards this corner of their native land.

"We cannot claim to have been the discoverers of this artistic Klondyke ; and, indeed, found already settled there many old acquaintances, fellow students of the Quartier Latin and elsewhere. It is difficult to say who was the original settler, for painters seem always to have known of the attractions of

the place ; but about the time I am speaking of, the tide set strongly into Mount's Bay, and it is curious to think of the number of painters, many of whom have attained distinction, who visited this coast about then. There are plenty of names amongst them which are still, and I hope will long be, associated with Newlyn, and the beauty of this fair district, which charmed us from the first, has not lost its power, and holds us still."

In an address read two years afterwards before the Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society of Falmouth the painter pursues his argument :—

"It will always be a debatable point how far it is necessary and wise for a painter to live and work in cities, in close touch with his contemporaries. I am perpetually being told that to London we must go, that it is the inevitable fate in store ; yet I cannot but think that it was a healthy and sensible movement in Art, the formation of these little colonies of painters, clustering together in charming rural districts, whose beauty inspired their work and afforded them abundant material. I would not quarrel with those who would have us forsake all this, and bid us return within that charmed four-mile radius of brick and stone. Their anxiety to lure us back is flattering to our vanity, but speaking as one who loves the country, I have so often seen the great city open its voracious maw to swallow up my friends, that I own I dread their arguments. I am the first to admit that interchange of views and mutual counsel are essential in our profession. Artists are by nature and temperament gregarious beings,

and must congregate together. They must and will hang together, as their pictures do on the walls of exhibitions. To me these same groups appear to solve the problem very satisfactorily, and afford that happy solution, by which the painter can live the quiet life of the country without too much isolating himself and losing the companionship of his fellow workers, which is almost a prime necessity of his existence. The brotherhood of the palette is a strong bond, and should unite us very closely. There are few painters, I think, who will not have to confess that the society they take most pleasure in is that of their brother artists, for it is a charming and fascinating country, this little Bohemia of ours, in which we are privileged to dwell. Not very rich, perhaps, or influential, but its inhabitants are happy, simple, and contented. You must not envy us our kingdom, nor grudge us our domain.

“It was thus that these colonies or schools, which have become more or less established institutions in Cornwall, were formed. These settlers, these artistic outlanders, journeyed down to this Rand district of the West, where the treasure they sought was to be found in such profusion. And they met with a kindly reception at the hands of the natives, fortunately provoking no resentment and creating no ill-feeling. They carried on their occupation in full view of all; and it seemed a peaceful and inoffensive one, affording the onlookers some little amusement, not unmixed, perhaps, with pity. A simple and harmless folk these strangers, whose wealth and worldly possessions were not such as to arouse cupidity, or to awaken the feelings of envy and covetousness.

They dug no ugly mine pits, nor did they erect huge factories for the manufacture of their wares; and the only chimney that seemed indispensable to their work emitted nothing worse than the fragrant odour of tobacco as they puffed away over their somewhat curious and singular industry. Thus humoured by a kindly-disposed set of inhabitants, their oddities pardoned and their whims excused, they increased and multiplied and became almost as closely identified with the Duchy as its famous pilchards, or that celebrated rock of St. Michael hard by where they had elected to dwell.

"Here every corner was a picture, and, more important from the point of view of the figure-painter; the people seemed to fall naturally into their places, and to harmonise with their surroundings. Coming as I had done from Brittany, a country where a beautiful national costume has been handed down from generation to generation, it was always something of a shock to find in England so little to interest one in the dress of the inhabitants. Most certainly for a wave of realism, the end of the nineteenth century seemed a most inopportune moment. It is useless to abuse our national costume. We are all agreed that it is in every way unattractive, and none the less we cling to it. The Englishman loves his hideous disguise, and nothing but the force of circumstances will ever compel him to forego it. I am convinced that if fishermen could manage their boats and trim their sails under such conditions, they would resolutely go to sea in tall silk hats and black frock coats. Fortunately, such garments are found inconvenient, and

they are obliged to don their quaint sou'-westerz and duck frocks, and all the rest of the picturesque attire which one is always struck with in strolling through a fishing village.

"All these things delighted me from the first, for here seemed to be a spot where the figures did not clash with the sentiment of the place, making one sigh for the good old days of picturesque costume, but actually seemed appropriate and just. For not only the dress, but its wearers were alike weather-stained, and tanned into harmony by the sun and the salt wind, so that the whole scene was in keeping and of one piece. Nature has not lavished all her care on the landscape here about, but has built up a race of people well knit and comely, fit inhabitants of such a region. Models, that prime necessity of a figure-painter, were to be found here, as good as one could desire; and I think I can claim to have been one of the foremost in accustoming the good folk of the district to the somewhat eccentric conduct which the out-of-door painter in his zeal affects.

"It may seem somewhat of a paradox, but I have often found the success of the picture to be in inverse ratio to the degree of comfort in which it has been produced. I scarcely like to advance the theory that painting is more successful when carried on in discomfort, and with everything conspiring to wreck it, for fear of rendering tenantless those comfortable studios the luxury of which my good friends in the Melbury Road and St. John's Wood so much enjoy. At the same time, I do seriously think that there is a certain quality of deliberateness most valuable in painting, which is un-

doubtedly encouraged where the conditions of one's work are not over and above enjoyable. In his eagerness to get the work done, the painter is careful not to waste time or linger over the job, but to go straight at the mark and make every touch tell. I have never painted with such directness as on those fortunately rare occasions when I have worked at sea, and I have carried large pictures right through to the last touch in smithies, stable-sheds, and amid all sorts of queer surroundings under conditions which when starting seemed absolutely hopeless and prohibitive. It is much discussed whether it is better to work directly from Nature or to make innumerable studies or notes and paint the picture from them. I believe no rule can be laid down, and that it is entirely a matter of individual temperament. My own custom has always been to work as much as possible on the spot, and practice has taught me that this offers certain advantages over any other method. There is a quality of freshness most difficult of attainment by any other course, and which one is too apt to lose when the work is brought into the studio for completion."

Almost simultaneous with the arrival of Stanhope Forbes was that of a trio of friends from Verlat's *atelier* in Antwerp: Frank Bramley, Fred Hall, and Leghe Suthers; to be followed soon after by yet another comrade of the same studio, Norman Garstin. From Paris came A. Chevallier Tayler, to begin his long series of paintings, starting with "The Pedlar," "Gentlemen, the Queen!" and perhaps best of all, the pathetic "Last Blessing." A devotee to the noble game of cricket, as the technical

insight of his lately-executed drawings, "The Empire's Cricketers," amply proves, his influence, in the first instance, may have been potent to attract to the place his friend, Mr. H. M. Rheam, also an enthusiast of the bat. But to this latter, as also to Mr. Norman Garstin, the more serious artistic attractions of the place have proved irresistible, and they, with still later recruits, among whom may be numbered the writer of this book and her husband, have joined the permanent ranks of the Newlyn artists. As to Newlyn itself, another faithful adherent has written of it:—

"Twenty years have gone by since then; and although with sorrow and vain protests, the painters have seen swept away many of their choicest "bits" as the progress of modernity pursues its relentless course, the core of Newlyn—that swift dip to the lapping surf which comes as a surprise to the stranger threading for the first time its tortuous lanes—still keeps its primitive charm. Dark and ominous threatenings of a new road which should carry us high and dry in comfortable dulness far above the incoming tide, have retreated into the limbo of the unfulfilled; and to the infinite satisfying of our love of line and colour, the steep cart-track still drops to the beach, and we can still look across to the admirable curve of the winding cliff road. Over the wet sand go the heavily-laden carts with their burdens of barked mackerel nets or glistening seaweed; the plodding pedestrian looks up just as of yore to the long lines of granite wall, to the irregular string of houses—whitewashed and tawny and pink—that pile up against the sky in all the delicious

irresponsibility of that good old bygone time, when each man built as he would. There have been changes: twenty years ago, one little tar-stained, battered pier held in the crook of its ineffectual arm all that it could of the huddled fishing fleet; now the long and solid walls of two new piers ring the harbour round in stately efficiency. But still, at high tide, the sea runs in with most aggressive vehemence, making the crossing of the old water-worn footway a thing of headlong plunges and splashing and much laughter."

Stanhope Forbes' first picture in Newlyn was of "The Slip" (*see Frontispiece*), as the steep pathway to the beach is locally called. In it the silver tide laps gently up under a grey sky, warming to amber at the horizon; a rowing boat is drawn up alongside the footway; a girl, bending over the iron rail, hands down nets and other gear to the fisherman, who makes ready to put forth.

Later in the same year he was drawn irresistibly to grapple with a far more ambitious work, which cost him months of patient study. The "Fish Sale" was the first of a long series of important works which have connected his name with that of Newlyn. In this picture, the sombre masses of the foreground figures tell powerfully against the silver of the wet sand; the square sails of the luggers further out to sea cut against the pale sky. Among the many studio-painted canvases on the walls of Burlington House in the year 1885, the "Fish Sale" rang out with its fresh vibrant note of sincerity; and as Walter Langley's "Among the Missing" told its poignantly dramatic tale at the Royal Institute that same



A FISH SALE.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

year, the attention of painters and public alike was vividly arrested ; the little remote Cornish village was lifted into the position of a fresh Art centre ; the painters already installed there were incited to more conspicuous effort ; and thither, in the following year, the steps of many more were bent.

In the late part of 1885, among new arrivals in Newlyn was one whose advent had a special bearing on the life of the place. Elizabeth Armstrong took her way into the West of England with her mother for a few months' painting in the already talked-of village. She was received with that simple, genial hospitality which always distinguished the colony. Her first studio was found for her by one of its members, and a queer place it was, by her account ! "A part studio, for the astute owner—a fisherman and dealer in marine stores—whilst letting it out for artistic purposes, stipulated that he should at the same time reserve the use of it for its original purpose, viz. a net loft. It was as unlike a recognised studio as it is possible for anything to be. All kinds of ship lumber were stowed away under cobwebby rafters : it was redolent of pitch and of barked nets ; and at intervals it was invaded by the red-bearded 'Cap'n' and a troop of fisher-lads, jersey-clad and sea-booted, who took possession without ceremony of the dark end of the loft, and proceeded to 'beat' or mend their nets by the rather dubious light of a ship's lantern, chanting all the time Moody and Sankey hymns or popular ditties."

Newlyn was a sociable little place in those days, as it has ever been. Good-fellowship prevailed universally among these painters, so

many of whom, then at the outset of their career, have since worked their way to the front rank ; and the long winter nights were often made less long by gay little studio gatherings to which one fought one's way undaunted by wind and storm over the slippery cobblestones. Roughly lodged as the pioneers of the colony were, their assemblies lacked none of the gaiety which so often deserts gatherings in more luxurious abodes. A dominant pre-occupation drew them together ; an absorbing pursuit which did not admit of the entrance of *ennui* and its attendant evils. Thoreau has said, "When a man has attained those things which are necessary to life, there is another alternative than to obtain the superfluities, *he may adventure of Life now*, his vacation from humbler toil having commenced."

But more often it happens that attaining to necessities and obtaining superfluities constitutes Life itself to us, the end is confounded with the means, and the dulness resultant on this vicious circle is blindly felt and lamented. But in the case of those whose means of life are gained by exercising an art, their very absorption in this means of livelihood enlarges their perceptions : they live face to face with Nature, uplifted and yet humbled.

The steep little streets witnessed many cheery greetings and meetings and the barn-like studios many jovial gatherings where none of the votaries of the pictorial art philosophised as the present writer has been permitted to do, the most poetically thoughtful among them being perhaps the most silent on what impelled his brush ; and, for the rest, a

prosaic jollity accompanied the relaxation from the tension of their work.

It was, naturally, not long before Elizabeth Armstrong met the young painter of the "Fish Sale," and a pleasant *camaraderie* was succeeded in June of the following year by a recognised engagement.

In the early spring of 1886 Stanhope Forbes was at work on the picture, "Off to the Fishing-grounds." Scudding along under a grey sky, a fishing smack makes for the open sea. Leaning against the mast, his "oiler" drawn across his shoulders, is the captain, the model for which was a jolly old sea-dog known as "Uncle Plummer," who possessed "that lively venturousness of talk which passes for wit," and whose sallies were greeted with applause by the fisher-lads leaning, hands in pockets, against the cliff railings. On one occasion when Stanhope Forbes was accompanying the newly-arrived artist lady round the village in search of points of view, this boldness of speech may be said to have had a hand in hastening the development of events.

"Here is one of our best models," said the courteous cicerone. "You may find him useful. I will call him up. Uncle Plummer, this is Miss Armstrong, who may want to paint you some day."

"Oh, aye!" roared Uncle Plummer, looking the young lady up and down with a genial smile; and then, in a voice like a megaphone, "So that is Miss Armstrong, is it? They be tellin' down along as how you and her be a-goin' to be wed. Good luck to 'ee!"

Immense delight of the small boys dangling

bare legs on the bridge ; stupefaction of the embarrassed young artists !

When brought to book some time afterwards, Uncle Plummer was quite unabashed. "I said 'ee was goin' to wed 'er, didn't I ? And so 'ee be !"

Of the boys fishing from the parapet of this same old bridge at Street-an-Nôwan, Stanhope Forbes painted a delightful little picture, the property of Mr. Maddocks.

Later in the year a good deal of time was spent at St. Ives with his parents and his *fiancée*. While there he began "Their Ever-shifting Home," using as a *mise-en-scène* a bit of hill road where old roofs against the sky line, and gnarled leafless sycamores, made a charming and somewhat melancholy background. The old road has long since been tidied up out of recognition into park-like propriety.

After this, Stanhope Forbes and Elizabeth Armstrong were busy with many canvases of smaller size, recording mostly the life and character of the village folk. Among these was "The Sweet-stuff Shop," by the first-named, and "The Critics" (*see facing p. 56*), by the other. These have all passed into private collections.

The engagement of Stanhope Forbes and Elizabeth Armstrong was a long one. It fitted in happily with the even tenor of their lives, as they continued, with but few interruptions, to dwell and work in the same village until their marriage.

In 1888, Stanhope Forbes painted "The Village Philharmonic," which was exhibited at the Royal Academy and acquired by the Birmingham Corporation. This is the first



THE VILLAGE PHILHARMONIC.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.
In the Birmingham City Art Gallery.

of his pictures which expresses the painter's delight in the contrasts of day and candle-light: a pleasure which he has vividly communicated in so many of his best-known works. In "The Village Philharmonic," a window lets in a pale light to a raftered and attic-like room; the strong illumination on the musicians' scores is furnished by a couple of lamps, the glow from which blends with the dying gleam of day, and these in themselves create a harmony. The singers, upright beside a table, are in full light, and the old man, bending over his violoncello, receives the warm touch on his worn face and silvery hair; and in the near foreground a seated figure with a violin tells dark against the radiance.

Another canvas of this year was "Palmistry," an excursion into a range of subject which Stanhope Forbes has not greatly affected—a girl and a man in evening dress, reading each other's fortunes. It won him the distinction of the Calcutta Gold Medal when exhibited in that city.

The spring of 1889 saw the completion of "The Health of the Bride," which was purchased at the private view of the Royal Academy by Mr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Tate. Perhaps for the first time the painter has fully reached in this picture what was to remain for ever after a dominant note of his life's message; his sense of sympathetic humanity. These people, in their humble little parlour, are real and living. Intolerant of all shams and false sentiment, the painter has made himself one with the people he depicts; he has understood the humour which lies so close to tears.

It goes for much that these pictured men and women are no professional models, but humble friends who take their share in the artist's successes. The sweet little bride, sitting at the wedding feast under her veil and crown, is now a Madonna-faced matron with yellow-haired children at her knee, and the pure lines of her countenance have inspired many a canvas since "The Health of the Bride" was painted. The old folk represented have long since taken their last journey up the long hill, to rest under the shadow of Paul Church tower, but in many a cottage room the reproduction of the picture hangs in affectionate remembrance.

The success of this picture assuring, in a great measure, the artist's future, Stanhope Forbes' marriage with Elizabeth Armstrong took place in August of the same year.



THE HEALTH OF THE BRIDE.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A., in the National Gallery of British Art.
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CHAPTER IV.

MARRIAGE, AND LIFE IN BRITAIN AND NEWLYN.

THE late summer of 1889 saw a quiet wedding at the little Newlyn church of St. Peter. A brief honeymoon with rod and line on Dartmoor, and then to work again. That character study of varying types and interests, "By Order of the Court," engrossed Stanhope Forbes throughout the autumn of this year. This picture has been so sympathetically described by Mr. Wilfred Meynell, that it is well to quote his words here :

"The scene depicted was that of a sale by auction in a humble home. But the scene itself, though it mattered so much to the bankrupt family, matters little enough to us, only the treatment of the scene—the excellent characterisation of the faces; the struggle here between regret and greed, there between regret and curiosity; the glimpse of God's generous out-of-doors, contrasting with the glooms and shadows and squalors within."

Simply and solidly painted, with a reticent technique held in check by the need of absolute fidelity to the realisation of his types—the homely, intent faces and the rugged hands—this picture had an assured success in the Academy of 1890; and, later, was awarded a gold medal at the International Exhibition of Berlin.

The first home of the artist couple was a cottage known as "Cliff Castle." A succession of painters had lived under its roof, and no one knows what first inhabitant is responsible for its curiously inappropriate name. The last in the irregular line of dwellings extending southward just over the sea, it stands back from the road, climbing fuchsias and escalonia shrubs partly screen it, and yet allow of an uninterrupted view from its bay window across the water to Marazion. Here the murmur of the sea is insistent and pervading, and its magic changes are always before one. On the opposite side of the bay a great lone rock lifts castle-turrets to the sky—"The Mount"—from which the bay is called. That space of changeful water is also known as "Gwavas Lake," for so does its deep indentation shut it in from all but south-westerly wildness of weather that it seems an inland water, blue as the Mediterranean at times. Flights of sails scud across it when the fishing fleet spreads its wings to seek its prey. On the innermost shore of the bay sits Penzance, a town which, possessing no remarkable architectural features, yet, by virtue of its situation, assumes aspects, mournful, startling or lovely, in response to ever-varying atmospheric effects. A clever water-colourist once disclaimed the title of landscapist, declaring himself a "weather-painter," and, indeed, it is weather that is the magician, when the rays of the sun, setting behind the town and her long line of hills, fires the dome of the market place which crowns the clustered roofs, and the taller houses of the sea-front are reflected in "waters stilled at even." And

weather it is that absorbs us when the town seems to crouch under the driving wrack : wet roofs gleaming to the sky, the esplanade disappearing from time to time behind sudden wreaths of white foam as the Atlantic rollers, driven by the "south-easter," hurl themselves on the sea-front.

Marazion, a little town across the bay, has an occult faculty often remarked, of catching whatever sunlight there is on any kind of day. Not so Newlyn, which from its position stooping easterly down a high hill to the sea, loses the sunlight early in the afternoon ; and people have often wondered why the artist colony chose to establish itself here rather than on the more favoured side of the bay, where Ludgvan and Gulval grow acres of wallflowers and daffodils for London's delight, where warmth and sunshine cause aloes and palms to flourish, and where fuchsias form hedges, and creeping geraniums cover houses. But the reader has been told the reason of the artists' choice.

The young couple continued their work in Newlyn, and the art of each, so individual in its manifestations, did not merge in the least ; but Elizabeth Forbes' method of expression, going on from strength to strength, outgrew the timidity which caused her first exhibited work to be more distinguished for delicacy and suavity than vigour. She now allowed her natural tendency shown in her studies—executed *à premier coup*, rapid, sure, and with full brush—to predominate. She had already adopted pastel as a medium, proving its adaptability for expressing the brilliant and quickly changing effects that appeal to

her, and her exhibited pastel work had won her entrance into the Grosvenor Gallery Pastel Society.

The spontaneous grace of children's movements attracts her powerfully, and realised as they were in her picture, "One, Two, Three, and Away!" she received the highest praise from well-known critics, and exhibiting it later at the Paris International Exhibition, a medal was awarded her.

We propose in a subsequent chapter to touch on the story of her life-work in connection with the reproduction of her pictures, which will be found grouped together.

Mr. Forbes' picture, "The Salvation Army," was completed and exhibited in the spring of 1891. At that date the fervour of the great end-of-the-century revival had but newly laid hold on the impressionable Cornish folk. More than a hundred years before, John Wesley had taken captive the imagination of the half-savage miners, the wreckers and smugglers of his day; and still these people, the gentler, more law-abiding descendants of that wild race, are predisposed to give ready response to the appeal of an emotional form of religion. The spectacle of any concourse of people, swayed in unison under the impulse of a strong sentiment, must have its fascination for the artist. Here this little group of the soldiers of the "Army": the lasses leading the briskly-chanted hymn, the young sailor with peaked cap who holds aloft the banner, the sturdy central figure in dark red jersey whose performance on the drum certainly cannot lack power, for he is a quarryman, newly converted, and more used to the



ELIZABETH STANHOPE FORBES, A.R.W.S.

A Charcoal Drawing.

By Herself.

rhythmic strokes of pick on granite—all intent on their idea; and then the outer ring of gaily-clad children, the lounging fisher lads, the carter passing by—all these made up a picture to the artist, more especially as he found it ready to his hand in what was to him the most sympathetic setting possible: the familiar beach, the quiet waters of the harbour, the brown sails spread to dry on the idle boats.

The summer of the same year was spent by the painter and his wife in Brittany, from whence much work was brought back.

In both "Grey Rocks and Grey Mullet" and "When the Boats are Idle in the Bay" Mr. Forbes shows his feeling for the pictorial effect of figure relieved against the sea, and makes us realise the infinite value of its exquisite greens and blues and far-away greys in giving a ruddy strength to the bronzed cheek seen against it, and in surrounding a feminine profile with a caressing light and colour. This environment gives such charm to the two heads bent—one over the net shuttle and the other over the needle—in "When the Boats are Idle in the Bay" and to the figures of the young girl and the old fisherman in "Grey Rocks and Grey Mullet."

It has already been related how the two young Paris students, H. H. La Thangue and Stanhope Forbes, had here, ten years previously, broken away from the traditions of the *ateliers* to apply all their most painstaking sincerity to the furtherance of the *plein air* cult; and now, in his fuller development, the last-named painter found a keen pleasure in going over the familiar ground.

The impression made on Mrs. Stanhope Forbes by her renewed acquaintance with Brittany is so clearly conveyed in her correspondence that some collated extracts therefrom should be here inserted :—

“Cancale has certain features in common with our own Newlyn. Further out, in a wider sweep of bay, lies the great Mont St. Michel—the larger prototype of our own St. Michael's Mount; the slate roofs of Cancale lie in shadow under the cliff just as nestles the kindred village on the English coast. Whosoever loves the Cornish soil must perforce feel drawn towards that Breton land, of which, if one believes the old legends, it once formed a part.

“There is so much in common, too, between the racial characteristics of the two peoples. Beneath the more apparent light-heartedness and *bonhomie* of the folk on the southern side of La Manche, one feels more, especially in the men, that deeper strain, that simple faith and capacity for religious emotion which, in Cornwall, had given Mr. Forbes his theme for his ‘Salvation Army.’ Here it naturally finds expression in the old beliefs and ceremonies of the Mother Church. Touchingly impressive is the celebration of the *Fête Dieu*, when one wakes to find that the whole sea-front and the steep village street have been draped by busy hands with all the clean white linen that the housewives can muster, garlanded with ropes of greenery and made gay with flags and flowers. At the appointed moment is heard the distant sound of the solemn chant, and the long procession is seen approaching: the priests in their



THE HAY CART.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of J. H. Balfour-Browne, Esq., M.C.

vestments, the scarlet-clad acolytes, the '*Filles de Marie*' in their blue and white, and then the long train of brown and bearded sailors, bare-footed and with heads uncovered, many carrying, as a votive offering, little carefully-fashioned models of their boats—all making their pilgrimage thus to the little favourite shrine, four kilometres away, where Our Lady makes perpetual intercession for all who go forth to the deep sea."

In the conformation of the Bay there is one essential difference from ours of Newlyn. Far, far out, at the *bas de l'eau* the ocean recedes, laying bare miles of gleaming sand. Then Cancale wakes to an especial and most picturesque activity. Down to the beach troop crowds of strong-limbed, white-coiffed women, skirts kilted high, and shrimping nets on shoulder; old men, boys, and girls, happy, gossiping, gaily gesticulating. "Venez donc, Madamé, et vous verrez comme il fait beau la-bas!" called out one of her models to Mrs. Forbes, her eyes sparkling with pleasure. "C'est pour moi un vrai fête d'y aller!" Of the patient, plodding peasant of the fields, one feels the pathos of his dulled senses, the glory of dawn and of sunset signify to him nothing but the beginning and the end of toil, but the strong salt sea-wind seems to have given these dwellers by the coast something of its own exhilaration. In inarticulate consciousness they are certainly alive to the wonder of that harmony in turquoise and silver which lies far out in the ocean bed at the *bas de l'eau*. There is spread out a whole world of freshness and fair colour and mystery, strange sea creatures flap and wriggle help-

lessly on the firm, shining sand; the white-capped girls scoop up the transparent shrimps in their nets, and gather up the precious guarded rough brown shells from the *parcs aux huîtres*.

Among these good-humoured, contented, poor folk, Stanhope Forbes found again, with pleasant recognition, many of his former models. One of these was a fine old bronzed sailor, known as "le père Bidon." On one occasion this jovial soul was posed for a study in which he was supposed to be drinking from a bottle, and Stanhope Forbes' stern sense of realism constrained him to arrange the old man with head thrown back, a real bottle of cider raised to his lips. For about five minutes, Père Bidon held on valiantly, suffering one knows not what tortures of Tantalus; then, dropping his hand, he contemplated the painter with a humorous twinkle. Lifting his *beret*, and executing a courtly bow worthy of an actor of the Comédie Française—"Tenez, Monsieur," said he; "maintenant je vais vous montrer comment boivent les marins," and without more ado, swallowed at a single gulp all the contents of the bottle.

On their return to Newlyn, Stanhope Forbes continued to work in what had been the primary direction of his art, and in this year carried out several commissions for portraits, among others of Mr. William Bolitho, of Polwithen, and of Mr. John Stone, of Bath.

1893 is the date of "Alec's" birth—that little fair-haired son, whose future fills so large a space in his parents' hopes and aspirations. Early in this year they had abandoned the cliff-side cottage for "Trewarveneth," then a



A ZANDVOORT FISHER GIRL.

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

small farm-house, but originally built by one William Godolphin in the seventeenth century. The arms of this worthy—his steel cap and breastplate, and cross-handled sword—still hang above his tomb in the adjacent parish Church of Paul.

The oddly sounding appellation of this little homestead signifies in the ancient Cornish tongue "the house on the hill," and veritably the ascent of that hill, stony and dusty, long and steep, is no light matter, as many a weary visitor from Penzance has found to his cost. But the little creeper-covered house stands back from the high road in a garden enclosed. Crumbling ivied walls shut out the westerly gales, and its quiet lawn is bordered in summer with many flowers. And this brings us to a very dominant characteristic of the subject of this book. He is a gardener: all the time he can spare from his many absorbing pursuits is spent in his garden and greenhouses, and every detail connected with the culture of the delicate blooms he loves is of the greatest moment to him. Flowers in masses always filled the little green drawing-room of "the house on the hill," and the way to the spacious studio lay through a tiny greenhouse, banked high with colour, and over-arched with fragrant heliotrope. There, with many works in process of accomplishment on the easels, the walls hung with the studies for many well-known pictures, it often happened when daylight failed, that the tools of the painter's craft were pushed aside to make room for violins and 'cellos; for the sister art of music finds many adherents in Newlyn. The painting of "The Village Philharmonic" was

so "felt" by its originator that his innate fondness for music led him on to the study of the instrument which had always most appealed to him, and so it came about that the "property" violoncellos of the picture were the forerunners of one, of more intrinsic worth, which remains permanently in his studio, and of which the study is a great pleasure and resource to him. Nor must mention of the mirth-provoking rehearsals be omitted, when the drama is to the fore. Among the light-hearted members of this artistic colony are to be found many most admirable exponents of the histrionic art, and the *ennui* of long evenings has often been chased away in the old Trewarveneth studio by the wit and whimsicalities of some well-known author, and by the humours, often involuntary, contingent on rehearsals.

Happy memories of thirteen years are all that now remain of the old home to its former tenants. A fresh sojourn in new tents has lately begun for the painter and his family; for close at hand, across the fields, another house has arisen, and now rears broad chimney-stacks against the sky. It has been carefully fashioned, each detail thought out and arranged to the liking and for the needs of the painter and his wife. They have been scrupulous to build their house so that it shall in time become in harmony with the rugged landscape which surrounds it. Broad and low, with granite walls, its type has been borrowed from the old farms and manors that once sheltered the loyal adherents of the King in fugitive Charles's day. These old homesteads have a style distinctively Cornish, and one feels the



LOUISE.

Dry-point Etching by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

rightness of them—their oneness in spirit with the granite boulders and rough stone walls of this part of the Duchy.

To the south the windows of the new house face the open sea and that far headland where the Lizard Light winks ceaselessly from dusk to dawn. From the windows of the west and north the wide panorama of the hills stretches in a violet haze below the sunset—those wild hills crowned with the rude fastnesses of a forgotten people. Across this narrow promontory, which is the Land's End, the sea wind blows strong and pure over waste lands, where the tawny wild grass bleaches white under the sun, and the heather and gorse have put on their purple and gold ever since the beginning.

The house itself is a testimony to the wide range of Stanhope Forbes' capabilities.

With no pretermittance of his daily craft—for were not "Home-Along," "Whiffing," and other works the product of that busy year?—he concentrated his intelligence for the nonce on architectural problems, and determined to fashion a home which should be the complete expression of his taste and judgment. The subdued but satisfying colour schemes, beloved of the painter and his wife, are carried out in their new surroundings. Sombre, but warm in its reds and browns, is the capacious studio, the ruddy glow of firelight on burnished copper and brass the only positive note. The wide chimney-place, with its arch of brick, is good to gather round on winter nights, when the logs blaze on the hearth and the wind howls without. Then the appropriateness of the motto, wrought by the Newlyn metal

workers on the great copper curb, makes itself felt to the full :

"Here shall ye see no enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

But a little while ago, the ring of hammers and hiss of planes possessed the studio, a workshop of a different order than it has since become. Now, a completed portrait stands on the easel—that of Mr. Julian Rogers, lately Secretary of the Institute of Surveyors, - a presentation portrait on his retirement from the society—and the artist, with his familiar tools about him, feels that he has at last formally taken "seisin" of his new abode.

Cooler tones of green and blue and soft ivory-white clothe the hall, with its wide and well-proportioned staircase and pleasant chimney-corner. Another art has lent a delicious note of purple in the window curtains, cunningly bordered with great poppies, wrought by the hands of young embroideresses, girls of the village, gathered under the artistic guidance of Mrs. Reginald Dick. A lovable house, without pretension to be more than an artist's home, filled with souvenirs brought from overseas—quaintly wrought metal-work of Flanders, and platters and bowls of Delft ; carved frames from Italy ; photographs from the well-beloved masters, Holbein, and Hals, and Jan Vermeer ; sketches and "bits" by brother artists, each with its history and gentle memory, the gift of a friend, or a reminder of a pleasant hour.

The chairs and tables, too, have their personal character, reminiscent of the days when periwigged Georgian squires sat long at the board, discussing Church and State ; and

"Sweet Molly Trefusis" herself might have reached down her dainty porcelain cups from the old corner cupboard, or sealed her love-letters at the rosewood secretaire. To these, the panelled walls and long low windows make an appropriate setting.

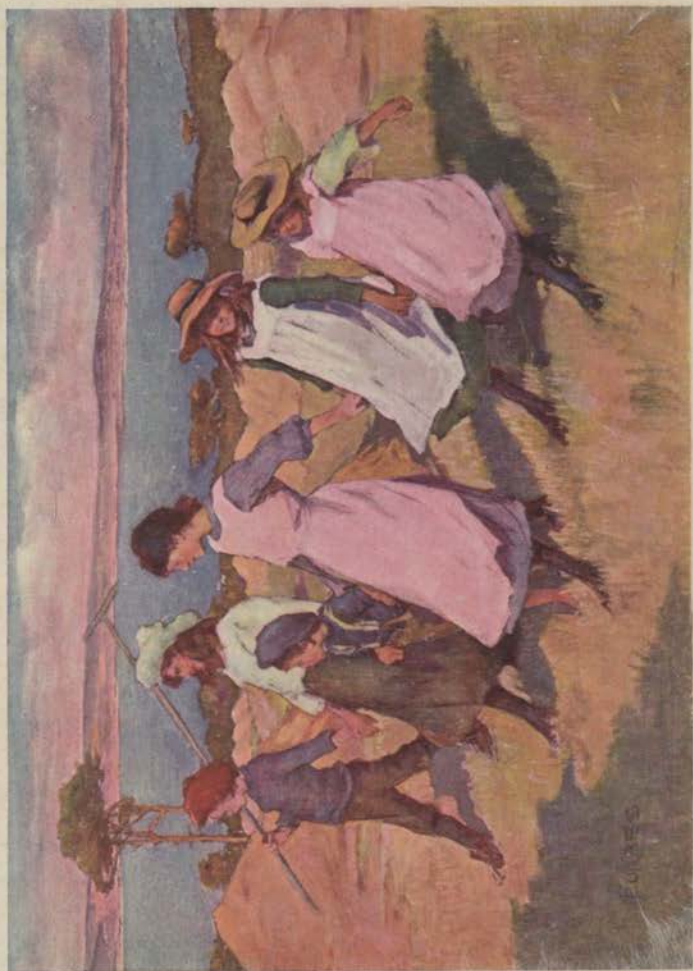
The square conservatory, adjacent to the dining room, is a pleasant place to linger in of a winter's day, now that the hyacinths begin to fill the air with perfume. A sun-bathed house, standing sturdily four-square to all the winds that blow, the upper windows opening wide to the seaward view.

The builders of the house have kept for it the quaint name of the farm, and of the high fields whereon it is built—"Higher Faugan," a derivation of which is the old Cornish word "fougou," a cave or hiding-place—for queer fragmentary legends linger round the spot, and, more especially, about a singular old wall or rampart which bounds the property on the north-west and affords an excellent shelter from the fiercest gales. It is connected with the name of a local squire, who, some hundred years ago, is said to have erected this colossal earth-work with the idea of providing a wind-screen to the mansion which he never built; hence this rampart is known to the countryside by the name of "Price's Folly." But parts of the construction bear traces of a much earlier, possibly even pre-historic, origin. Whether it may claim some kinship to the ruined forts and hill-castles that lie beyond no one can tell; nor what long-dead hands laid its rough blocks of granite; nor if under the thick growth of furze and trailing blackberries lies buried the secret, as

some assert, of the *fougou*, or hiding-place. Perhaps the badgers know, tunnelling deep into the heart of the old earth-work; or Master Reynard, trotting demurely by, with side glances at the farmyard across the fields.

It was long a solitary place, sought out only by stray bands of children, who braved the gorse-prickles in quest of bluebells and primroses in the spring and blackberries in October. Now, although the yellow gorse still, in its season, fills the air with its fragrance, its exuberance is checked, and a broad grass-path leaves the top of the old wall free in its entire length to the guest who cares to seek the rush of fresh, exhilarating air. A vigorously-growing plantation of pines and hollies now clothes the sloping inner side of the rampart, with promise of further shelter to the house of "Higher Faugan" in its turn. A lower path affords protection and warmth when the keen north wind above nullifies the strength of a winter sun, and lower again is a little dell or hollow, the quarry of the old wall builders, but with its granite scars long hidden beneath thick growth of broom and thorn. The garden-loving painter sees in it further possibilities of beauty, when roses and all the glory of summer bloom shall be made to flourish within the sunny shelter of its cup; when the young maples, and beeches, and oak shall have begun to arch their branches above, and the dark masses of the pines shall lend a dense background to their more delicate tracery.

Only one who has himself loved a garden knows the almost passionate sympathy of the gardener with the saplings he has planted,



"HERE WE COME GATHERING NUTS IN MAY."

Water-Colour Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

his joy in their strenuous growth, his grief when they are worsted in their battle with the sea-wind, his pride in their ultimate victory. As an artist he feels that the bit of nature he has undertaken to prune and tend is but a picture on a larger scale, the lines and harmonies of which need the long seasons for their making ; and often it seems to him that this picture of his, its canvas spread to the open sky, will prove to be the fairest he has made, and the one which shall best serve to keep his memory green in this his adopted land.

CHAPTER V.

ELIZABETH STANHOPE FORBES: EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING.

“ELIZABETH ARMSTRONG was born an artist in Canada”—the happy phrase is Wilfred Meynell’s—and the following letter tells in her own words the chief incidents of her life up to the time of her eventful visit to Cornwall:—

“DEAR FRIEND,

“For this book of yours you say that you would prefer me to tell, in my own words, the story of my earlier years—up to the time, now a good many years ago, when we began to know each other.

“I will do my best to satisfy your wish, but how to spin such a yarn out of the slender materials I possess, so that the world outside my own small circle may find interest in the tale, I confess puzzles me not a little. As I look back through the years, for the most part very happy ones, I feel that the only noteworthy milestones are the memories of kindly faces, and of sympathetic outstretched hands. Along the road I have travelled, I know that I owe to these all that has fallen to my share of success or joy. For my own personal pleasure I shall love for a little while to look back, and revive old interests and friendships in memory. But if, in setting down the things which seem to have influenced me most in my



IN THE ALMSHOUSES, ZANDVOORT.

Dry-point Etching by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

artistic development, I prove tiresome to you and still more to your public—well, you have brought it on yourself, and so I must plead for forgiveness !

“ I was a lonely little child. My big brothers, whom I adored, went off early about their business in the world, and I was left to find my own interests and pleasures. When I was thrown with other children, I suffered agonies of shyness, and always tried to creep away and curl up in a corner, if possible, with a book. For which, of course, I was laughed at, and thought myself disliked. But I can never remember the time when I did not get a passionate pleasure out of what seemed to me beautiful, and little memories, such as of a spray of honeysuckle, and the pencilled cast shadow of it against the old grey wooden house where I was born, seem clear and strong to me still. I had not always a garden to be happy in, for the life of my father and mother in Canada necessitated many changes of abode, and these naturally brought about an almost Spartan simplicity of surroundings. We lived in our trunks : there was no time to accumulate ‘pretty things,’ and few books came in my way which could afford much food for my imagination. Perhaps this only served to stimulate the mind-hunger in me, for I can remember how I used to cherish random scraps of poetry, the rhythm of which attracted me ; and I suppose the painter instinct must have awakened soon, for I can recall still how the very names of the great men, whose work I should not have understood had I seen it, used to make my pulses beat. I used to sit doubled up for hours, staring into vacancy

like a fakir, while fancies and sensations bubbled inside me, till the mocking voice of some elder member of the household brought me back to the existing world and I would spring up covered with confusion.

"I think the clearest impression which I have left of those early Canadian days is of the glory of the marvellous mantle of snow, which each succeeding winter throws impartially over the fair wide country and the rawness and unloveliness of the new towns: so much that is ugly is hidden away; so many angles softened; so purely dazzling when the sun is high with the delicate tracery of every leafless twig drawn in clearest cobalt shadow on its marble immobility, flushing to rose-leaf colour under the sunsets, and loveliest of all—beneath the twinkling frosty stars. I used to scrape the frost-flowers off a window-pane and stand watching, lost in the wonder of it all, till I was carried off to bed. I remember that one of my great pleasures was to be allowed to meet my father of an afternoon, and to walk with him round the wooded hill, on which stand, admirably placed, the Government buildings of Ottawa, and to watch the great Chaudière Fall, the 'boiling cauldron' of the French *voyageurs*, bubbling and churning its white froth for ever. I think my father must have understood me better than I realised; for, after the manner of sensitive children, I was dumb about all my dreams and fancies; but I was his Benjamin, the child of his old age—still a baby when his sons were growing up and passing out into the world. It was his desire that I should have every opportunity to study and grow wise. He it was who un-



CRITICS.

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.,

By Permission of W. A. Duncan, Esq.

earthed a wanderer from Paris, an old abbé with some Beaux-Arts training, to give me my first lessons in drawing ; and soon after decided that my mother should bring me to England and place me at school here.

“He accompanied us as far as Quebec and put us on the ship. We called good-bye to him from the vessel’s side as he was rowed ashore, a tall man, standing erect, with thick curly grey hair and very blue, clear eyes. It was my last sight of my father, for two months afterwards a black-sealed letter came to us in England. He had been stricken down suddenly, in full health, by a mortal stroke.

“The next influence which helped in my moulding was the life which began for me soon after under my uncle’s roof, in an old-fashioned, riverside house in Chelsea—a life almost as solitary as before, but richer in artistic influences ; for my mother, anxious to carry out my father’s wishes, had me entered, at almost too young an age, as a student at the South Kensington Art Schools. It was almost a pity that I was set so soon to follow the school routine ; most of my companions were beyond me in age and development. But the Museum was a treasure-house of inexhaustible delight, and although my artistic taste has passed through many phases since those days, I find that many things which drew me most strongly then are potent to move me still—the beautiful fragment attributed to Buonarrotti: the Madonna of the downcast lids that seem to quiver, so soft and living and warm is the marble face ; and the terra-cotta copies of the calm prelates who sleep with folded hands on

their tombs—in the room of the Italian Renaissance.

“Then, just about this time, in a fortunate hour, I came upon what was to me my first novel. In a corner of an attic in the old Chelsea house, tied up in dusty, forgotten bundles, were copies of the *Cornhill*, containing ‘Romola,’ with the Leighton illustrations. I shall never forget the hours spent prone on the wooden floor under that baking roof! But my heart was aflame with the realisation of Romola, the ‘strong white lily,’ beautiful false Tito, and poor little Tessa; and the murmur of old Florence was far louder in my ears than the noises in Chelsea streets. Among my uncle’s books, too, I rejoiced in finding nearly all of Ruskin—in which I waded neck-deep—and was whirled breathless through all the great Carlyle series. And in this connection I remember a little incident which impressed me. There was a certain stationer’s shop, past which lay my daily road to the schools, where among many photographs of celebrities hung some which set forth the outer presentment of the ‘Clothes Philosopher.’ Fresh from the pages of the ‘French Revolution,’ I was staring hard at these, and at last exclaimed in a tone of intense longing, ‘Oh, mother, I’d give anything to see Carlyle!’ I looked up as I spoke, and close behind me was the identical soft felt hat, the plaid scarf, the shaggy head, and the same deep-set, melancholy eyes, which were looking down into mine with such a queer, kind, droll expression, as though they would say, ‘You little atom of humanity, what do you want with Thomas Carlyle?’ I do not know if he would have spoken. I



JEAN, JEANNE AND JEANNETTE.

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

By Permission of George McCulloch, Esq.

only know that I turned crimson to the ears and fled down the street, leaving my mother bewildered.

"I was never happier than when I could escape in the summer evenings to the flat leaded roof of our house among the chimney-pots, to watch the sunset colours fade from the sky and the river. Next door was the old Rossetti house, never opened, and full of mystery to me. The poet-painter lived in it no longer. He lay dying elsewhere at this time, I think. What was behind the closed shutters I never knew; but the old paved courtyard was fascinating to look down upon. The house was said to have been built for Nell Gwynne, and the monogram of royal Charles is in wrought iron over the gate.

"After some time, family affairs took my mother back to Canada. I went with her, and for almost the first time in my life found a chance to participate in the gaieties natural to a young girl. To say that I enjoyed all the pleasure of long summer days among the islands of the great river would put it mildly. Devotion to a life of art seemed very far away, and had it not been that an invitation to spend a few weeks in the United States took my mother and me to New York, my life might have drifted into a very different channel. But once there, I found in the Art Students' League an art atmosphere so congenial and comradeship so warm, that I ever look back to the three winters spent in the American city as among the dearest part of my memories. Our teachers were young painters, but newly returned from the art centres of Europe, and brimming over with enthusiasm; we, the

students, boys and girls, taking ourselves in deadly earnest, but nearly all with the healthy American sense of humour which serves to keep the leaven sweet.

"The long and fierce discussions on 'Art with a big A' would sound quaintly pathetic now, if one could hear them reproduced on a phonograph! We used to keep them going on winter evenings in the class-room till the cast of the 'Running Faun' glimmered ghostly in the twilight, and the irate caretaker came to turn us out. A good deal of good-natured chaff and criticism used to fall to the share of the 'English girl,' as they chose to consider me. Here where the fame of the brilliant exponent of 'symphonies in white' and 'nocturnes in blue and silver' was in the air, a raw disciple, fed on 'Modern Painters,' had short shrift. And not so very long before, William Hunt had come back, preaching the gospel of the Romanticists: half of us were on our knees before Jean François Millet; and then from Paris came the news that Bastien-Lepage had taken the world by storm with his 'Jeanne d'Arc.' It was a glorious time, and we had plenty to argue about, until at last a handful of us turned restless and left our happy Alma Mater behind to try our luck in that Europe which was calling to us so loudly.

"Unwisely, as I have sometimes thought, I chose Munich as my Mecca in preference to Paris. I was influenced in this by my strong admiration for the work and aims of one of the most inspiring and enthusiastic teachers it has ever been my good fortune to meet, Mr. William Chase; and by that of the little

group of companions in art, including Duveneck and Frank Currier, who had all spent their student days in the Bavarian capital. But I soon found that these Americans were regarded as aliens and exotics by the banks of the Isar ; and that in returning to their native land they had taken with them their energy and fresh outlook. The newer school of the Munich Secessionists, which is to-day so much to the front with its vigorous and sometimes bizarre forms of expression, had not then arisen, and of the Americans only Frank Currier remained, a good deal of a recluse in his little village of Schleiheim. But I recall a delightful visit to him, in a room stacked with canvases and littered with drawings, for the most part instinct with a nervous and passionate appreciation of the glory of sunsets over low-lying fields, and noble woodland studies, where the interlacing boughs of wind-blown trees were drawn with a tense and masterly energy. His felicitous use of charcoal in landscape work impressed me greatly, and taught me what a wide range—from velvety blackness to the pearliest of greys, from firm and strenuous line to faint tones like a breath on the paper—lie within the possibilities of that most ductile of mediums.

“ But in the recognised art training of the schools, I found my sex to be a perpetual disadvantage ; also in the local work of the exhibitions there seemed at that time, to my possibly immature judgment, to be little that was inspiring ; so that I look back upon my five months’ sojourn in Munich as on a period for the most part of depression and discouragement, only mitigated by much kindness and

hospitality on the part of friends whom we made there; and I fear that I often regretted having left too soon my dear New York school before I was ripe for independent work.

“My devoted mother, who had sacrificed much to accompany me on my wanderings, felt for my disappointment, and after awhile I induced her to fall in with a fresh wish of mine, and to go with me to far-away Brittany—to the little village of Pont-Aven in Finisterre, from whence enthusiastic letters written by some of my League comrades were reaching me. This outlying and primitive land of Brittany had then for some time been attracting painters from many lands; and it was in many ways a notable, and certainly a cosmopolitan crowd, that gathered of an evening at the long table d’hôte at the Hôtel des Voyageurs in Pont-Aven. Some of the men had already made their mark at the Salon and at the English Royal Academy; others, then comparatively unknown, have since ‘arrived.’ A lively, picturesquely-clad, Bohemian group of men and women, who might themselves have been worthily set on canvas by a Zorn or a Kroyer, lingering at the board as the day’s experiences were narrated and the latest theory advanced, and the flow of talk went merrily on under the swinging lamps.

“It was here that under the impelling influence of much friendly encouragement I made my first tentative effort towards working for the exhibitions. Some tiny water-colours, sent to the initial exhibition of the Royal Institute, met with unexpected success; for, to my intense surprise, I had the satisfaction



ORA PRO¹ NOBIS.

Water-colour Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

By Permission of Frank Berrill, Esq.

of learning that they had found purchasers on the opening day.

"This gave me courage, and I went on to more ambitious efforts, which all, I think, ended in failure and erasure ; but the time thus apparently wasted had its compensations. I was learning my capabilities and limitations. The first spasmodic flutterings of a newly-fledged sparrow are not much more ineffectual than are generally the first efforts of the beginner in art in the direction of original work. The poor fledgling of the *atelier* finds himself for the first time face to face with all the problems of choice and arrangement of subject—complicated with all the material difficulties of changing effects, recalcitrant models, and of the technique of the material in which he works.

"I, like many another, might have succumbed to hopeless depression had it not been for the generous stimulus of praise bestowed on me by more experienced painters who apparently found promise in these uncertain efforts of mine.

"I cannot describe the charm of the impression that this old Breton land—'La vieille Armorica'—made on me ; but I soon realised that I lacked the power to give expression to what moved me so greatly in its larger aspects, and I turned to the quaint child-life of the place which delighted me. But they were so provokingly human, and gave me so much trouble, these little people ! I remember two little maids who once paid a *naïve* but most unwelcome tribute to my skill. They had been posing for me together, and I had drawn in the two white-capped heads with much

painstaking study. I was called away for a few minutes, and on my return I was horrified to find one of the faces almost obliterated.

“ ‘ Who has done this ? ’ I demanded, irate.

“ Silence for awhile, and threatening tears. Then one of the small maidens found voice :

“ ‘ C’est Marie-Jeanne que l’a fait ! ’

“ ‘ Marie-Jeanne, why have you destroyed my picture ? ’ queried I, with gathering wrath.

“ The brown eyes of Marie-Jeanne began to brim over, but the accusing voice of the friend continued :

“ ‘ C’est parce-qu’elle se trouvait si jolie sur son portrait, qu’elle a voulu se donner un baiser . . . et regardez donc, Ma’amselle, tout le charbon noir s’est resté sur sa bouche ! ’

“ Then there was a most paintable urchin, a small *mousse*, or cabin-boy, blown inland like his brothers the sea-gulls, one stormy wintry afternoon. He came knocking with a piteous little plea for admission at my door, and once inside it was impossible to dislodge him. He perched beside my stove and spread out blue hands with grunts of deep content. Charitable trips that I made to the hotel kitchen proved that he had an insatiable appetite. He consented to pose for me after his own fashion, but when night fell he refused to stir.

“ ‘ Let me sleep here, Ma’amselle,’ he pleaded ; ‘ it is so good here, and warm ! ’

“ The next day he gathered in from somewhere a kindred spirit—another and larger *mousse*, and between the two of them they made my studio unendurable. For three horrible days they smoked vile cigarettes and



MRS. PERCY SHARMAN.

*Water-colour and Pastel Drawing by
Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.*

cooked, weird messes on my stove, until at last, in desperation, I was forced to appeal to Mlle. Julia, the deservedly famous hostess of the Hôtel des Voyageurs.

"She ascended the steep stairs, an embodiment of the awful majesty of law and order, and with a *mousse* grasped firmly in each powerful fist, sternly cast them forth into the night and the storm. I was pitiful over the little one with the wistful, pleading eyes; but Mlle. Julia was inexorable. They were *vauriens*, and it was not to be permitted, and the next day my studio was vigorously cleansed with soap and water.

"While at Pont-Aven, I continually heard rumours of a certain young Englishman, working in the adjacent town of Quimperlé, with whom in years to come I was destined to make acquaintance. Some of my American friends occasionally visited Quimperlé, and returned with the report that Stanhope Forbes was, in the jargon of the *atelier*, 'very strong'; but it was not until my return to England that his 'Fish Sale' and his Breton pictures of the preceding year aroused my interest; and it came about that our first meeting was in Newlyn, in the beginning of 1886.

"In the summer of 1883, my mother and I were summoned to London, as the uncle with whom I had lived years before in Chelsea was anxious that I should establish myself near him. I feel that any account of the causes which led to my adopting an artistic career would be incomplete without mention of this uncle, my mother's brother, Dr. Thomas Hawksley, a man of remarkable and most winning personality, possessed of indomitable

energy and will-power, which were strong enough to triumph over the disabilities of a fragile and often suffering bodily frame. All the tenderness of his nature went out to the young and struggling, as is testified by his darling scheme, the School of Handicrafts for Poor Boys, which he founded at Chertsey, an institution which has helped many a young man forward to an honourable career, and which continues to-day to carry out the generous intentions of its originator. Ever since the old Chelsea days he had taken the strongest interest in my progress, and he now wished to give me the opportunity of coming into touch with the life of the metropolis.

"But my passion for the freedom and the wide horizons of the open country held me too strongly. I could not settle down happily to the restrictions of streets and squares, so I escaped from the town whenever it was possible. Once to Holland, again to join some of my former comrades from the League. William Chase was working at Zandvoort, near Haarlem, that summer, and with him that brilliant draughtsman, Robert Blum. It was delightful to me to find myself once more in the familiar *entourage* with the added charm of a novel setting. I worked hard, mostly in the ancient almshouses where Chase and Blum had already found most fascinating subjects. To my pleasure, they did not look upon me as an interloper; but I found, on the contrary, my former teacher as ready as ever to help me with advice and criticism. I used many of the studies made there as motives for dry-point etchings, which I executed after my return to London, and which won me my



WILD HYACINTHS

Pastel by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

admission to the Royal Society of Painter-Etchers. This was a branch of art of which I was intensely fond, and one of the few modes of expression which I could pursue more easily in London than elsewhere. Afterwards, when I had settled in Cornwall, the difficulty of having my plates printed, more especially of having the trial proofs pulled while actually at work, proved too discouraging, and gradually, to my regret, I found myself compelled to lay aside my etching tools, and I ceased to contribute work to the society to which I had felt it such an honour to belong.

"During my two and a half years in London I became a regular contributor to the Grosvenor Gallery, the Royal Institute, and to Suffolk Street; but still, in spite of obvious advantages, I continued to chafe like a prisoner behind bars in London, both in the dark days of winter, and in the breathless summer heat. My kind uncle decided that it would be wiser to let me follow my inclination; so it came about that the end of the year found my mother and me *en route* for Newlyn.

"And now, dear friend, I think you know the rest; so I will leave you to pick up the threads and to weave such a web as may seem most fitting to you out of the united fortunes of Elizabeth Armstrong and of Stanhope Forbes, which began soon afterwards to mingle. I hope that all I have written may not seem to you too puerile an introduction to the story of the real purpose and business of our lives; but such as it is, I send it you, with all my thanks for all the friendship and interest you have ever shown to me and mine. *Auf wiedersehen!*"

CHAPTER VI.

ELIZABETH STANHOPE FORBES : WORK AS A PAINTER.

AS we have shown in a preceding chapter, Mrs. Stanhope Forbes had already, as Elizabeth Armstrong, attained a certain distinction through her pastel work and her delicate dry-point etchings. Her work, retaining its individuality, has continued gaining in strength and charm.

Correct draughtsmanship, always her strong point, came to be a cult with her—not that laborious correctness which fails in the end to convey the impression of the thing seen through confusing it with unimportant and accidental detail; and the masterly building of the framework underlying her vigorous colour became more and more a feature.

In 1891 she painted "The Witch," now the property of Mr. McCulloch. This was practically the first of Mrs. Forbes's series of outdoor pictures. She had felt how the sombre dank of an old orchard lent itself to the impression of the weird and uncanny, conveyed by the malign aspect of the old woman. Seen from behind the hemlocks and moss-grown stems of apple-trees, the witch has struck terror to the heart of the young girl who turns her face towards her, her figure poised for flight.

In 1892 "The Minuet" was painted. This



A FAIRY STORY.

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.]

picture, sober and restrained in effect, shows an old-fashioned room with polished floor. A large window admits the light, softened by white draperies, against which is seen a girlish figure and a child. Another illumination falls on the figures in the foreground, the quaint little maid and her instructress in the stately dance.

Another picture of that year was "A Game of Old Maid," in which the light from a window makes a glory of the intensely gold hair of one of the little players. "Mignon" was the heroine of another of Mrs. Forbes' pictures: Goethe's little Mignon seated on a table with all her theatrical "properties" round her, singing her song, "Kennst du das Land."

From the visit to Cancale in the same year Mrs. Forbes brought back many sketches and pictures of Breton interiors and of peasant life. Among these, one was entitled "Jean, Jeanne, and Jeannette," in which the lines of the composition afforded by the bending figure of the girl seated on a barrow, and the form of the goat reaching up to nibble from her hand, are charming, and the artist has evidently delighted in rendering the quiet harmony of the silvery willow trees just beyond, with the lilac of the barrowful of clover (*see facing p. 58*). Mrs. Forbes' mind, large in grasp and penetrating in vision, pierces to the true secret of child-like charm, seeing far beyond the superficial prettiness with which art traditions have invested it.

The "half-humorous pathos" Walter Pater speaks of as pertaining to "the diminutive rounded shoulder of the child" is exquisitely

felt and surely rendered. In like manner also, the buoyancy—instinct with rush of youthful blood, innocent of “pose”—in the limbs of older children, some characteristic swing of motion, the grace of line and curve to which the artist’s being responds, are seen in a flash. This grace, indeed, becomes the dominant impression when she has finally set down what touched and thrilled her; all else—the accidental and the petty—has receded from her vision. Thus, in “Moorland Princesses,” the outdoor light touches just those curves in the childish figures that are completely natural in their grace; the artist thus leading us to respond to such lines in Nature, instead of idly wishing to see the dainty shepherdesses of a fictitious Arcadia. In “A Fairy Story,” no wonders of which the children are reading are more fair than the pattern their little reclining bodies make, or more joyous than the colour that invests the whole scene.

Besides this subtle insight into what truly constitutes the beauty of childhood, Mrs. Stanhope Forbes is deep in the secrets of the “sweet influences” of outdoor nature; and in her work one is under the dominion of some mood of Nature she has herself felt sensitively, and rendered with truth. In “Imogen,” the pathetic girl figure travestied in doublet and hose, sleeping the sleep of grief, is set in the gloom of a forest, the treatment of which, with its bare stems and fallen leaves, is in itself a vibration of the chord so poignantly struck. And in “On a Fine Day” how joyously does the sunshine flooding the heights, echo the mirth of the girls whirling their mediæval draperies to the lilt of old Franco Sacchetti’s



"ON A FINE DAY."

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

song, "Su! ragazze!" "Be stirring, girls! we ought to have a run!" Franco says, "So one by one they caught hands, catch who can. Then singing, singing, to the river they ran; to the river, the river, and the merry-go-round carries them at a bound to the mill o'er the river."

The artist, carrying out Sacchetti's description, seems to have caught the spirit of the poet across the years, and visualised the "*ridda gioconda*" of which he sang.

It was also the Italian singer who inspired the woodland picture entitled "If I were as once I was," where the Court fool, wearied of the mockeries of life, stands gazing with envy at the dwellers in the sylvan solitudes, in which he is but a chance wanderer.

Many of Mrs. Forbes' pictures were painted in the little wood of which different aspects afforded the setting for "Imogen" and for "Take, oh take those lips away." Here she has her painting hut among the great lichen-covered boulders that seem to hint darkly at far-off legendary strifes of the Titans of Old Cornwall, so do they seem hurled and piled fantastically. And the trees that have grown up among them are no stately forest kings such as are commonly seen in our England, but are gnarled and weird, their branches grey with lichen, forming intricate traceries overhead, and all trending and arching towards the steep eastern rise, the soul in them cowering before the onsets of the westerly gale which drives salt and wet from the Atlantic.

Spring-tide spreads a blue veil of wild hyacinths over the knolls and declivities there, and a lovely woman, holding her gathered

sheaf of these is the subject of a pastel here reproduced (*see facing p. 66*). In "Take, oh take those lips away," Mrs. Forbes has chosen for background the tall proud pines that stand within the rampart of beeches, and their straight lines, with the soft light filtering through, make a lovely pattern with the gracious curves of the figures of minstrel and maid.

In "Hop o' My Thumb" we see the children winding in and out among the boulders and the deep pools that glint in the shade of that eyrie wood. The little hero is none other than the fair-haired "Alec" himself, as he was in those childish days.

And again in "The Leaf" (of which a reproduction faces p. 74) the serene melancholy of woodland in autumn is as poetically rendered in line and colour as it is in Leopardi's verse, Rossetti's translation of which Mrs. Forbes attaches as sub-title to the picture:

"Where the wind carries me
I go without fear or grief.
I go whither each one goes:
Thither the leaf of the rose,
And thither the laurel leaf."

And in the three-panelled picture, "Will o' the Wisp," the artist has reached the heart of the suggestive mystery of woodland. A beautiful witch, her feet dipping in the misty exhalations that fill the steep declivities, curls herself on the fallen leaves, and watches the gathering of the sprites as they come "trooping all together, Green Jacket, Red Cap and White Owl's Feather." The moon looks in behind twisted branches, and all the witchery of her influence is here (*see facing p. 76*).



"TAKE, OH TAKE THOSE LIPS AWAY."

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

"A Dreamland Princess" takes us far from this favoured haunt of the artist to the mill some miles beyond, but the inspiration is still fantastic and of fairyland. The bending figure of the miraculous visitant is instinct with that feeling for beautiful line which distinguishes the painter.

The inspiration of the little wood filled Elizabeth Forbes' mind with images and scenes of a series or cycle of pictures which she determined to carry out, welding them together by means of a simple tale in which the modern everyday life of the countryside should be interwoven with old legends of chivalry. Thus the tale, "King Arthur's Wood," was written. Mrs. Forbes finds expression for her fancy even in another art than the pictorial, and the story of Gareth and Lynette is related with simplicity and charm. She puts it in the mouth of a goblin inhabitant of the wood, who tells it to little "Myles"—a nowadays child dwelling in the West. Side by side with the tale, the pictures multiplied.

Primarily occupied, as Mrs. Forbes is, with the essentially pictorial, the true scope of art, she blends it perfectly with the imaginative idea; and it was to carry out the unification of the two in illustrating this tale that she invented for herself a mode of using charcoal with water-colour. Her feeling for decorative effects had led her to find a favourite form of expression in pastel, but for the work she had set herself there were many objections to the use of this medium with its obvious limitations. Thereupon she boldly adapted to the more precise conveying of her artistic intention

those qualities inherent to water-colour, united with all the resources of delicacy and force peculiar to charcoal, producing effects full of a subtle charm, a *genre* for which it is not easy to find a precedent.

This story book and its illustrations were laid by for a while ; but when, in the spring of 1898, Mr. Forbes exhibited in London his great fresco destined for the Royal Exchange, Mrs. Forbes took the opportunity of showing such of the illustrations as were already finished to a few artist friends, among whom were some members of the Royal Water Colour Society. Upon their suggestion and, indeed, in response to their expressed wish, Mrs. Forbes submitted the portfolio of drawings at the next meeting of this society, and was at once elected an Associate. It was while at Ascaïn, in the Pyrenees, that she had the great pleasure of hearing of her good fortune. She was spending the spring months in the Basque country with her husband and son ; and this visit to what was a new hunting ground to them was most freshly and charmingly recorded in an article contributed by Mrs. Forbes to *The Studio* of October, 1899, extracts from which we here give.

“ Perhaps it was because we came on our village just at the magical minute when the last red gold of the sun was dying from the hills ; perhaps it was the troop of handsome barefooted girls who bewitched us. They were crossing the old Roman bridge, erect and dark against the pale sky, their sickles at their waists, bundles of fresh-cut grass on their heads. ‘ *Addios!* ’ they called back to the strangers in a chorus of civil and kindly welcome.



THE LEAF.

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

"The Angelus bells were ringing over the water; and for all these reasons our affections went out to the old square tower with the string of pearly-white houses at its feet, with its broad setting of purple mountains above, and purple reflection in a bend of the river below. . . . There was 'La Nivelles,' winding faintly pink through lush green fields; there was the village, doubled on the quiet water; there the old bridge which dominates the stream with such a noble curve—ivy-grown, but sturdy and secure for all its centuries. All these arrested our wheels, and we exclaimed with conviction, 'Eureka! this shall be our village and abiding place!' . . . The mountain of La Rhune is the particular glory of all that region. A giantess among the lowlier hills, the villages cluster round her knees; watered by her rushing streams, their flocks and herds feed on her high pastures. The faint tinkle of innumerable sheep-bells floats down from above to the valley—a running accompaniment to all other sounds. The uneven path is hard to the feet, and we were hot and weary before we found the unpretending white house we were in search of. But a little haven of fragrant coolness and shade it seemed to us under its pines and flowering laurel. A touch of comfort and 'home' in its aspect attracted us—perhaps a legacy from a former English owner. On two sides the hills enfolded it so protectingly; from its terrace one had so fair an outlook over the sunlit valley that we at once determined that the villa must and should become our home for the space of our holiday. The preliminary negotiations were quickly concluded, and three days

after we took formal possession. We made our entry into the village, some of us in a pony-chaise and some of us awheel, while with dignified slowness the baggage-waggon—a bullock cart piled high with supplies and materials for our campaign—had been travelling over the road for hours.

“We were not long in making the acquaintance of the handsome sunburnt bevy of girls who had greeted us that first night on the old Roman bridge. They were all sisters or cousins, lively as green lizards on a sunny wall, and apparently as poor.

“One of them, a hazel-eyed *gamine* of fifteen, attached herself especially to our party. She was an ideal model, a brown-limbed, lithe young animal, to whom blazing sun, drizzling rain, or biting March wind appeared to be all equally unimportant. Her disregard of all ideas of comfort, as we understood it, amused us. The only food for which she cared seemed to be a dry crust or a handful of wild sorrel leaves. If we pressed her to partake of any *frandise* more to our own taste, she either refused it altogether, or put it aside for her small neighbours at home. At first we had abundant opportunity for our open-air studies, but the uncertain mood of the spring put an end to them after a while. For ten days or more, black rain-laden clouds came rolling up heavily from the sea, with hysterical bursts of sunshine between, that lasted just long enough to lure us out to our doom—a thorough soaking. After a few days we gave it up—turned our poor painted presentments of the jocund spring dejectedly to the wall, and sought refuge, shivering, in interiors.



WILL O' THE WISP.

By Elizabeth Stunhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

“There was one queer little habitation where a Rembrandt old woman lurked in a velvety gloom; she was moulding fresh butter into pats between her crooked old hands at the window where the light fell strongest. When the *Angelus du Midi* rang, she dragged out a few sticks from a corner, and, crouching inside the big fireplace, made up a crackling blaze. Then she stirred up a weird decoction in a pot, and poured it out steaming for her grandson, who came in wet and bare-footed from the fields. She was sublime—that old woman in her invincible philosophy and capacity for seeing the joke of the situation. The crazy old cottage walls shook with her jolly laughter when a small neighbour of superior education explained that the English stranger wanted to paint her. Such a superlatively funny thing had never happened to her before. She signified through the interpreter that the stranger was welcome to the house, such as it was; but she would not be put in a picture, not she—her time was over for that sort of thing. But it was a wonderful joke all the same, and she cackled and bubbled away with inerriment all by herself for an hour after.

“We had grown to know all the phases of the great mountain while we lived under the shadow of her: her days of purple and gold, when she lay sleepily basking in the sun; her sullen days, when she drew the rain like a veil about her head; and there was one morning when we awoke to find her gleaming white and radiant under a mantle of snow. Before our holiday came to an end we resolved to make the conquest of her; so one fine morning

we set out, a stout-hearted band of pedestrians, with guides and the faithful Marie, a mule for the weaker ones to ride in turns, and all the essentials for a picnic. At first, we struggled up through a gash cut deep in the ochre-red earth. The yellow of furze and broom grew thick on the high banks and almost met overhead. Then we followed footpaths hardly visible and always growing steeper. Panting, we would reach the summit of one crag, only to find other peaks high above our heads. Fringes of the delicate hoop-petticoat narcissus nodded at us provokingly from inaccessible places. When we turned to look down we saw the stretch of level blue which is the Bay of Biscay, that grew ever wider as we climbed, and the white line of the breakers that curves away to Biarritz at the north; while to the left of us was the wide mouth of the Bidassoa, with Fontarabie and the Cap du Figuier. It was a very hot and tired company that after hours of climbing flung itself at last full length on the little plateau at the summit, and clamoured for cooling drinks. But with the sweet wind blowing in our faces, straight across from the jagged crests of the Pic du Midi and his mates, when we peered over the edge and looked down, down into the serene blue depths below, where the rivers showed like skeins of silk, and where two huge birds, eagles, or the l  mmergeyer of the Pyrenees, were majestically circling, we owned that our climb had earned an abundant reward.

“And when, the contents of our hamper disposed of, we all lay supremely content on the short sun-dried turf, and the cigarettes were alight, we called on Marie and her companions



THE KISS.

Pastel by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

for an impromptu entertainment. They gave us one with respectful alacrity, finding our request the most natural thing in the world. To the accompaniment of an old Spanish love-song, and snapping their fingers to mark the time with the sharp click of castanets, they whirled and pirouetted in the fandango, their light-clothed figures showing admirably against the blue sky. And as a final *tour de force*, Marie, who was a notable dancer, gave us a *pas seul* full of complicated execution, an empty bottle balanced on her head ! "

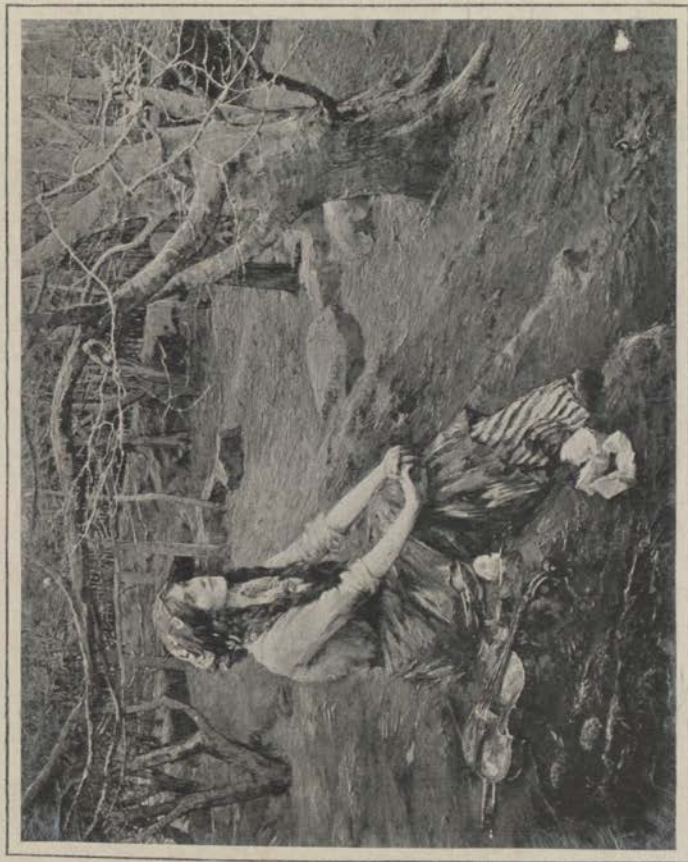
In 1900, Mrs. Stanhope Forbes held an exhibition of some of her work at the gallery of the Fine Art Society, a collection which was entitled "Children and Child Lore." Here, in many cases, the result of her observation and keen sense of beauty were expressed in the medium she had adapted to her needs. The titles of some of these pictures suggest at once the source of their inspiration, "The Village across the River" and "A Shepherd of the Pyrenees" being records of the journey of the previous spring, and of the artist's admiration of the "Dante-like" stateliness of the guardians of the flocks and of the Spanish village mirrored in the stream. "The Apple Orchard," too, showed Ascaïn in the white glory of spring blossoming ; and in another little Basque children leant over the mill stream fishing.

Other pictures in the exhibition bore the titles of "The Witches' Pool" and "Fir-trees," and these brought the enchanted wood of Mrs. Forbes' delight into ken. "The Amulet" is held by a damsel quaintly mediæval and gracious of aspect. And some are

purely landscape themes, such as "The White House," which glorifies with sunset glow the little cottage high-embowered in fields, seen from the valley below, the dwelling of the little "Myles" of the artist's book. For the rest, the exhibition contained mainly drawings and notes in colour of children's doings and their characteristic movements, such as the merry boy in "A Cracker Cap," and the sketch of the quaint, hooded little fellow off to "School" with his books under his cape.

The following year Mrs. Stanhope Forbes exhibited at the Royal Academy a picture entitled "The Gipsy," representing a girl sitting in a wood, listening to the birds which her magic—or, rather, her gipsy knowledge of Nature—has brought near. The trees which surround her are rendered with the mastery Mrs. Forbes has acquired in their delineation. She wrests out the secret of the character of a tree; there is life in those branches, which in their stillness seem to strive, as indeed branches eternally do, toward some end of their being. The outline of the twigs is instinct with crispness, and the lichen-stained trunks are exquisite in grey and sea-greens.

This feeling for the character of tree life is also evident in Mrs. Forbes' picture of 1905, "The Woodcutter's Daughter," which picture is also a further revelation of her sympathy with childhood's joys and sorrows and its legendary lore. The little girl, whose Christmas was shorn of the glories of toy-laden tree, is very touching in her sweet childish seriousness, and amaze before the magically lighted fir in the heart of the woods, and the decorative effect of the whole is delightful.



THE GIPSY.†

By Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.
By Permission of C. D. Morton, Esq.

In 1904, Mrs. Stanhope Forbes held at the Leicester Galleries another exhibition of work accumulated in the past four years. The collection was entitled "Model Children and Other People," and Mrs. Forbes prefaced the catalogue with a little introduction which so embodies the feeling she brings to her work that the reader will be glad to find it transcribed here.

"Humorous, quaint, and pathetic are the little, irresponsible folk, the volunteer models of the village and countryside. When the painter, filled with energy and anticipation, emerges at the day's beginning, they are already watching afar off. They gather in bands. If permitted to carry the painting kit, it becomes a triumphal procession. Desperate their ambition to be 'put in the picture.' Marvellous their immobility, their large-eyed gravity for a too short space. But their playmates, the wind and the sun, call too loud to be resisted. Ambition flickers and dies. The hope of pennies large and brown becomes a hollow and elusive mockery. The smiling mouths begin to droop at the corners, and the little, restless feet refuse to be still. Then it becomes a duel *à l'outrance* between artist and model, till at last, with the conviction that inextinguishable hatred has been kindled in those childish breasts, the painter, now weary and browbeaten, returns on his road. But the children keep no grudges; the same row of eager, smiling eyes watch for his coming next day, and the duel begins anew. Dear little people! to the painter who goes back year by year, to the same hunting grounds, the memory of them becomes glorified and

tender. The little sun-burnt faces and the little calico frocks become as much a part of the bright landscape as the patches of pink thrift in the clefts of the granite boulders. And one marks the flight of the years with their changing. The yellow-haired baby of one summer is the sturdy brown-legged urchin of the next. Still a little longer, and the tiny schoolgirl with pinafore and satchel is found again in the slim young matron, mothering a yellow-haired baby in her turn. The children change, but always the same wind ruffles the dry grass on the hill-side, and drives the strong blue waves in to break on the shore."

This exhibition was composed entirely of water-colours, and Mrs. Stanhope Forbes, pursuing her eclectic method of dealing with this medium, introduced in some of these the pastel-like touch of solid colour. Thus in "The Grey Muff" the fair, bright, girlish face has the soft charm of pastel while the darks which surround it are transparent; and in "The Fan" the illumination a Japanese lantern casts on the figure of the lady in a ball dress is wonderfully real in its strength and glow. The colour forms, with the charcoal below it, half-tones, suggesting atmosphere most happily.

One of the main features of the exhibition was the group of original drawings for "King Arthur's Wood."

It has been told how Mrs. Forbes had first evolved her mode of treating water-colour when working out her ideas for this book, and nothing could be more suited to noting down and translating into visual imagery the effect on the mind of remote and darkling legends of chivalry. Using for background the-weirdly



THE BLACK KNIGHT.

Water-colour Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

From "King Arthur's Wood."

By Permission of Edward Everard, Esq., Bristol.

romantic scenery of the little wood, and the mournful suggestiveness of wild moorland, Elizabeth Forbes evoked a dream world of stalwart chivalry, of maidenly grace, of the sombre terror of evil lurking in sable mail, side by side with poetic aspects of everyday peasant life. The book was finally brought out in the Christmas season of 1904, the accurate reproduction of work of this kind having been a task of magnitude, which was consummately executed by Mr. Everard, of Bristol.

The book met with an enthusiastic reception, and its peculiar charm was truly described by a well-known critic in *The Studio*, who thus commented on "King Arthur's Wood":—

"To few, indeed, is it given to retain after their first youth the consciousness of the deep mystery that lies hidden beneath the simplest and most familiar forms of natural beauty; whilst even rarer are those who combine with that consciousness the power of giving expression to it in a form that appeals alike to the child-like and simple-hearted, the experienced and the travel-worn. Such are the true poets who still live in the heaven that lies about us in our infancy; but is, alas! as a general rule, too soon obscured by the garish light of the commonplace. That Mrs. Stanhope Forbes is the possessor of these rare gifts is already well-known to all who are familiar with her exhibited paintings; but in the ideal fairy story, with its exquisite illustrations, each one of which is a poem in itself, that she has recently published, she will come into touch with a far wider public. Even without the tale within a tale, told by the goblin to the widow's boy, the book would be a treasure-house of beauty,

so touching is the picture of the humble little home on the side of the hill, so Millet-like the interpretation of the pathetic side of the peasants' toils; but with the golden thread of Arthurian romance woven into the weft of everyday life it becomes a veritable idyll.

"Mrs. Forbes has been especially fortunate in the interpretation of her exquisite water-colour and charcoal drawings. In the former, her fine sense of colour is brought out with wonderful force; and in the latter, for which the subtle gradations of tone with the warmth so characteristic of the original medium, are rendered with exceptional fidelity."

That many of these illustrations are pictures and poems in themselves, and could well stand apart from the text is truly said; and these are not so much the gorgeous colour themes weft of the decorative and the imaginative, as the little charcoal impressions, echoes of a mood, and suggesting colour so wonderfully that it is difficult in recalling them to remember they are compounded only of black and white. In one sombre page, coming night steals over a bleak moorland, among the gorse and bracken of which a small dwelling shows a low roof line. That is all. It is almost too dark to distinguish much, but as—according to Maeterlinck—the quality of some silences is more significant than speech, so the quality of this dark is intense with suggestion. Viewed merely technically, the values are so precise and subtle that in this square of dusk there are all the atmospheric gradations of a mile of receding moorland. Technicalities apart, the spiritual essence of night is here.

And in another charcoal drawing of the



"FOR MYLES HAD GROWN A MAN,
WITH A MAN'S THOUGHTS AND DESIRES."

*Charcoal Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, "A.R.W.S.
From "King Arthur's Wood."*

By Permission of Edward Edwards, Esq., Bristol.

boy, Myles, gazing from the outside of the wood into its close and secret depths, one feels the thrill of something akin to awe with which—even when childhood was past—one peeped into the cathedral aisles of a deep lonely wood, a feeling which keeps the holiday-maker on the wide, beaten track of Epping Forest, avoiding the deeper sylvan haunts with the remark, "Something about it makes me afraid."

These are only a few instances picked out at random from the wealth of suggestive imagery the book contains.

All that distinguishes Mrs. Stanhope Forbes as an artist has here come into play : the sympathetic insight which makes her work essentially a revelation ; her fine sense of form, with its tendency to dwell on the fairer and more gracious aspect of things ; and her poetic outlook through Art on Life.

CHAPTER VII.

STANHOPE FORBES : ELECTION AS A.R.A.

CLOSE by that central bit of beach where gather the life and noise and business of the village, where the boats run in under the north pier and the buying and selling of fish go on, where Stanhope Forbes found and recorded his "Salvation Army," there used, some years ago, to exist a certain foundry, the fires of which have since been extinguished. From the blackness within came the continuous din of hammering, the gush of smoke, the sudden shower of sparks from the glowing and smitten metal—a place above all others for the sensitive and nerve-ridden to hasten past, one should say. But probably the seeker after realistic effects made his mental notes upon it, as he went by, on his way to his work on the beach ; for soon after his return from Cancale in the autumn of 1891 Mr. Forbes formed the somewhat courageous resolution of attempting a large canvas within its walls. Once inside, one's eyes grown used to the smoky, velvety gloom, the weird fascination of such a place asserts itself. Superb in its masses of deep shadow and sharply smitten lights, the heaps of rust-red lumber in neglected corners, the discs of the flywheels dimly seen high up in the blackened rafters, the cobwebbed windows making a note of pale green in the midst of the ochres and umbers. Then the



CHARITY.

Water-Colour and Pastel Drawing by Elizabeth Stanhope Forbes, A.R.W.S.

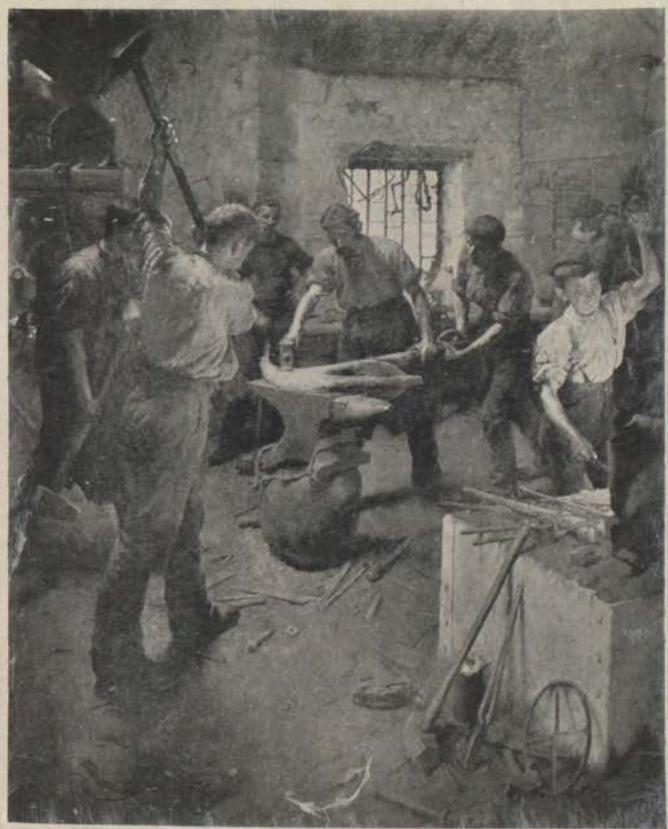
leathern-aproned workmen moving to and fro ; their grimy faces and bare chests and arms flashing into sudden, almost unearthly illumination as their bodies swing to their hammering, and the orange glare leaps from the furnaces. Here, in this old foundry, had been fashioned for generations the anchors, the capstans, all the iron gear of the sea-going craft that lay under the shelter of the pier outside, the masts and the sails of them seen through the open door. Now the painter seeking his subject took to haunting the old foundry with palette and brushes, challenging the curiosity and good-humoured chaff of the outspoken workers. Day by day he watched "the forging of the anchor" ; saw it snatched from the molten bed of the furnace, shuddering through white heat to dull-red glow, under the reverberating blows of the sledges. For once, he was forced to lay aside his cherished principles and content himself with studies and notes made on the spot ; the large and final canvas had to be carried to completion in the greater quietude of his own studio. But thither by dint of much diplomacy the unwilling blacksmiths were lured. They came with an air of *méfiance* to pose, much as a high-spirited horse watches the approach of a stranger's tentative hand. Queer jargon of a sort quite other than artistic went on in the studio ; but they saw the "cap'n" through with his picture, and were rather proud of it when finished. The painter was considerably amused, when the picture afterwards hung on the walls of Burlington House, to find his "right-hand" and "left-hand" strikers severely criticised as being a technical slip

made by one who did not understand the business, this being a method employed, for convenience' sake, continually in the workshops.

To turn to Stanhope Forbes' rendering of his theme, his dominant note is always strength—strength of impression, strength of illumination, of contrasts. In "Forging the Anchor" this delight has given itself full play, and communicates itself to us. With the painter we rejoice in the power of that tremendous swing of the sledge-hammer, the brilliant strength of the glow of molten iron, and its glare on the rough-hewn faces; and though this artist never aims at an obvious and superficial poetry, the absolute fidelity with which the scene is rendered does not preclude suggestions of spiritual power, of hope, of life that

"Is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the strokes of doom,
To shape and use."

It was while this work was in progress that one morning early the welcome news was flashed over the wires that on the previous night he had been elected to the Associateship of the Royal Academy. Amid all the pleasure of the honour done him in the recognition of his talent, perhaps the pleasantest part lay in the warm and sympathetic congratulations of his Newlyn *confrères*, and in the somewhat bewildered enthusiasm of his good friends of the village. Mrs. Forbes remembers one worthy dame who, with mysterious beckonings, called her into her cottage. First closing the door, she whispered :



FORGING THE ANCHOR.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of George McCulloch, Esq.

"They was tellin' down on the cliff as 'ow Mr. Forbes 'ad got somethin', she didn't rightly know what"—the good woman spoke as if she feared measles—"and would Mrs. Forbes mind sayin' what it were?"

Formal recognition of the new Associate's Academic laurels was worthily paid not long after—in the form of a studio supper, the first of a series of joyous little gatherings which fêted the successive official honours conferred on several members of the colony. On this occasion, hilarity ran high over a "striking" design for a menu card, perpetrated by Mr. Fred Hall. (*See facing p. 90.*)

This was the period when most of the artistic life of the colony congregated in that "Meadow" which Mr. Forbes in his "Newlyn Retrospect" describes as a field in which "a whole encampment of studios is clustered together on a slope overlooking the bay."

"At first," he says, "we had been contented with improvising our studios out of discarded net-lofts, or any other available structure—indeed, I fear we must at times have acted the part of cuckoo and evicted the rightful occupants; but, by degrees, the more conventional studio has sprung into existence, and these were among the first of them."

"They were originally founded by one of the best friends the artists have ever had—Mr. Arthur Bateman, a gentleman who came to paint and live at Newlyn in the early days of the colony, and who out of a strong feeling of comradeship and a desire to help his friends by facilitating their work, purchased this field and dedicated it to the service of artists and of art. And truly it has served us well, for

in turn each of these buildings has been tenanted by one or other of our best-known painters, and this spot has been the birthplace of many a picture which has won fame of the School."

Here it was that Frank Bramley planted the hollyhocks that he delighted in painting, their tall spikes of bloom telling with such charming effect against the sun-lit sea, in "After Fifty Years," and the great purple poppies of his "Sleep"; and John Da Costa scattered the seeds of his "Groves of Evening Primroses." There might have been seen a "group of Elizabethan gentlemen in doublets and hose, chatting pleasantly with swarthy blacksmiths; whilst a little maiden in mediæval attire would lean over the steps to gossip with these gentry of another age.

For subjects of all kinds found favour in that meadow, from the gorgeously attired Florentine figures of Mr. Gotch to the stout mariners of the *Revenge*, as depicted by Mr. Frank Bourdillon; the crab-pots and fishing nets of one painter, and the grimy sons of Vulcan of the other. There used to be one day of the year when the meadow, and, indeed, all Newlyn, was *en fête*. This was "Show Day," when the pictures intended for the Academy were exhibited, and all the studios thrown open to the public. Then the gay crowd streamed in and out of the studios, some ramshackle, some spacious and well-built, some hidden in creepers and under trees. Greetings were exchanged and congratulations made to the artists, for whom the people of the neighbouring town have always cherished kindly feelings; and when tea was served in the sunny field, with its clumps of flowers and glorious



STANHOPE A. FORBES, A.R.A.

From a Caricature by Fred Hall.

outlook, "Show Day" seemed like a pleasant picnic.

But these things belong to the past. The yearly show is now held in the Art Gallery—Mr. Passmore Edwards' gift to the painters of Newlyn; and a new generation has taken possession of the meadow.

"Forging the Anchor" was followed in 1893 by "The Lighthouse," in which, from the shadows of the harbour, a small boat puts forth in the twilight—the standing figure of a boy telling strongly against the glooms and glancings of the shifting water, erect in the wide boat which he propels from the stern by means of one oar, the grasp on which is instinct with the force born of dire times of stress, though now the powerful hands are only employed in quietly paddling the boat along, while another mariner fishes with the line. The drawing of the curves of the boat reveals all the beauty of line inherent to world-old inventions, arisen in response to elemental needs; and the subtle rendering of the reflections—strong and green under the boat, thin and serpentine as they dip into the gleam—convey a sense of reality and movement further carried out by the drifting smoke from the little coast steamer moored alongside the pier.

This is no longer the old pier noted by Mrs. Forbes in her word-sketch of Old Newlyn. Of the new erection, Mr. Forbes said in *The Cornish Magazine* some years ago, "Let us be thankful that the new piers are as thoroughly satisfactory to the eye as they are fitted for the work for which they were constructed. Severe and simple, they are yet pleasing to look upon, and have added to the beauty of

the harbour rather than in any way marring it.

"At the end of one of them," he continues, "is a small lighthouse, which I can never contemplate without certain uneasy sensations. For off that pier-head, day after day for months, I painted in a crazy old fishing boat which lay at anchor there, and with unsteady hand endeavoured to 'dodge' the motion of the waves."

The next three succeeding years found Stanhope Forbes deserting the harbour and the village for subjects further afield—partly, no doubt, because his change of abode to the top of the hill widened his outlook to motives of another order. The first of these to awaken his enthusiasm was a sight very familiar in this part of Cornwall. Granite is largely quarried in the neighbourhood; enormous blocks are hewn out and laid on a ponderous cart and drawn by horses of huge size to the harbour whence they are shipped. And there is something majestic in the oncome of these teams—the four horses straining and trampling; the rumble and roar of the cart with its shrieking, grinding brakes; and the figure of the driver dominating all this brute force. Amongst the very diverse scenes traversed by these quarry loads, the painter has chosen the heights where long lines of distant road stretch into a troubled sky. The huge block, torn from the breast of the everlasting hills, borne forward unswervingly to serve its appointed ends, has in it a suggestion of the oncoming of Fate.

Several portraits and pictures of smaller size followed the completion of this "Quarry Team," among the first, the portrait of Mr.



THE LIGHTHOUSE.

*By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.
In the Manchester City Art Gallery.*

Richard Bolitho, of Ponsandane, Cornwall, has been chosen for illustration as a happy example of an absolutely natural—indeed, accidental pose. Mr. Bolitho, having ridden over to Trewarveneth to settle preliminaries, happened, as he talked, to rest, half-sitting, on the studio table, hunting crop in hand. (*See facing p. 94.*)

"What sort of position do you want me in?" he asked.

"Stay as you are!" cried the painter, taking in the lines of the composition thus presented to him, and the question was at once settled!

Portraiture continues to occupy Mr. Forbes' brush at intervals, and one of his latest achievements in this direction is the portrait of Lord Mount Edgcumbe, of which a reproduction appears in these pages (*see facing p. 96*), and which in its sober dignity worthily takes its place beside the records of another generation by the masters of the past.

That furze-clad, ragged moorland, with its winding road, which Stanhope Forbes chose as an appropriate setting for his "Quarry Team," lies beyond a certain roadside hamlet, the sole business and animation of which seem to concentrate in the forge or smithy. Its importance can be understood when one remembers that this is the high road to all the Land's End district; so here stop for gossip and repairs all the farmers on their way to and from Penzance Market. Not unnaturally, the painter of "Forging the Anchor" and of "The Quarry Team" found a double fascination in the place, as he would see it in the late evening on his way home from work: the welcome glow from the flaming forge within streaming

across the road, great shadows stretching up weirdly over the rafters, the silhouetted figures moving across the glare. And then, by day, the patient horses waiting their turn to be shod, in just such an illumination as pleased him best—glow of flame and the cold lights of out-of-doors. Small wonder that he should decide that here was a picture ready-made to his hand ; and on this occasion he persevered, in spite of the smoke and grime and discomfort indescribable, in carrying out to the letter his cherished artistic tenets, and in painting “The Smithy,” from start to finish, on the spot. He has secured a simplicity, a concentration of effect most satisfying to the eye. In the opinion of many, this is the work on which, were one canvas only to be singled out, the painter might well be content to rest his reputation. Among the suffrages it has won, it can be mentioned that it was awarded a gold medal of the first class in the Paris International Exhibition of 1899, also having previously been adjudged a gold medal at Munich, where the Government desired to purchase it for the Pinakothek, or National Collection ; but it had already become the property of Richard Burke, Esq., a well-known Irish M.F.H.

The spring of 1896 found Stanhope Forbes hard at work on a large canvas representing a scene in which the varied play of light he so loves is afforded by the flicker of lanterns brought into a dark stable by a farmer family roused at early dawn to see “The New-Calf.” Already “The Quarry Team” and “The Smithy” had proved that the broad range of Mr. Forbes’ art included—what is often



R. BOLITHO, ESQ

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

reckoned as a separate branch—the painting of animals. Here the ruddy flicker that calls out the shapes of cattle in the gloom is not more scientifically rendered than those shapes themselves, and that of the tiny birdling, still so quaintly uncertain of gait. This broadness of his range is further shown when he treats landscape, as in "Across the Stream," where the figures are but notes in the purely landscape theme. This picture represents a lovely valley where trees rise up beside a flowing stream. It was painted at Buryas Bridge, where the visitor to this part of Cornwall experiences one of the surprises of this varied countryside, which—austere in wild moorland, and in coast scenery often sinister of aspect—suddenly smiles from out the deep shelter of some such combe in a veritable pastoral. The woodland charm of this district of Buryas Bridge was so much felt by Stanhope Forbes that he returned thither to paint the more recent picture, "Nomads." Aspects of gipsy life form one of the few elements that may be called "romantic" (in the sense in which Scott uses the word) still left us by modern civilisation. They touch the imagination with echoes of a far-off remote migration and relics of Eastern occultism and poetry. In his frank rendering of these "Nomads," Stanhope Forbes, as is usual with him, leaves the story to the spectator's sense of the significance of form, light, and colour—a story to be conveyed to the reader by no other avenue than the eye, and which stuns us here in the untrammelled ease of action of these wanderers suffused with the free light and open air they love; the strong tones of the horses and the silvery

distance, veiled to the right by the smoke of the ever roofless hearth of the nomads.

So ardent a worker is Stanhope Forbes that it would be difficult to detail each picture he has executed. Never spending a whole day in painting, he yet works with such concentration and intensity of purpose that more is accomplished in a few hours than would have resulted from the work of days in another's case.

Though a characteristic of his art is that it is self-contained, never swerving aside in its tendencies in obedience to outside influences, never vacillating in its choice of direction, yet a certain alteration is noticeable in these later works, due to further development of that art along its appointed lines; and the painter of "The Health of the Bride," with its insistent realism, has, in these later pictures, often forsaken the sombre skies and still grey light with which he and the School have been reproached.

"Chadding in Mount's Bay" is like a joyous song, with sunshine, childhood, and the smile of the sea for theme. And in "The Seine Boat" the sunlit, rugged fishermen types tell out against the radiant water with a quite different charm from that realised in "Grey Rocks and Grey Mullet." There is, in particular, one figure in this picture—that of the old man, whose tall figure in the white "jumper" is brought into strong relief, as he leans against the boat's load of ruddy brown nets—which is instinct with pathetic dignity. Indeed, Mr. Forbes has never wedded accomplished technique to sympathetic insight more worthily than in this noble rendering of the old fisher-



LORD MOUNT EDGCUMBE.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

man, ready for his task despite the burden of years, gazing with steadfast serenity across the eternal sea. The original of this figure was a very favourite model of Mr. Forbes, not only by reason of his fine physique, but also because frequent association with a nature so direct and true, so full of self-respecting dignity and affectionate fidelity, had brought about a relationship between them more intimate than is common between artist and model.

"I'd make the sun to shine on 'ee all the time, if I could, Mr. Forbes," exclaimed "Uncle William" one day in an outburst of commiseration, when the impatient painter, palette on thumb, was waiting on the uncertainties of a day of broken effects, to give him the glowing sunlight he needed for "The Seine Boat." "Uncle William" is also the central figure in "Off to Skibbereen," "The Fisherman's Yarn," "The 22nd January, 1902," and also appears in the dress of the period as a riverside boatman in the foreground of the Royal Exchange fresco, "The Great Fire of London."

CHAPTER VIII.

STANHOPE FORBES : LATER WORK.

“SO I down to the waterside, and there got a boat, and through bridge, and there saw a lamentable fire . . . , everybody endeavouring to remove their goods, and flinging into the river, or bringing them into lighters that lay off ; poor people staying in their houses as long as till the very fire touched them, and then running into boats, or clambering from one pair of stairs by the waterside to another.”

So wrote Mr. Samuel Pepys in his diary on that disastrous Monday, September 2nd, 1666 ; and when Stanhope Forbes received from the Sun Insurance Company the commission to paint for them, for the Royal Exchange, a panel illustration of the Great Fire of London, he began immediately to cast about for an incident which should be at once strongly dramatic and at the same time lend itself to decorative treatment. Out of many word-pictures, the especial passage quoted above sprang to his memory and lingered there. Here was his opportunity, uniting, as it did, his passion for firelight glare and its attendant shadows, his knowledge of waterside effects and of boats, of groups of people clustering about piers. Here was a chance for movement and grouping seldom obtainable—the rushing flame and, driven before it, the pell-



THE SMITHY.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of Franz Hanfstaengl,

Owner of the Copyright and Publisher of the Photogravure.

mell rush of the terrified people, clutching at their household treasures ; the rare chance for decorative arrangement in the figures forced under a common impulse down the steep, waterside stairs to the boats below ; the high gables of the timbered houses above dimly seen through the billowing smoke.

Stanhope Forbes accepted with enthusiasm this splendid and, alas ! too rare opportunity for executing a decorative work on a large scale, which the felicitous idea of Sir Frederic Leighton had just rendered possible. He it was who led the way by generously presenting the first panel to the Royal Exchange. His initiative was warmly seconded by the Gresham Committee, and by the various City Companies, with the result that the great colonnade of the Royal Exchange is now being rapidly enriched by a series of wall-pictures, in which, after the manner found most fitting by the people of all nations and times, the great civic events are vividly recorded.

Experience has proved it safer that these large wall-pictures, owing to the humidity of the English climate, should be executed on canvas, rather than on the actual plaster of the walls, although the same medium and methods for painting are employed. They are then applied to, and incorporated with the wall by a process known as "*Marouflage*." This enables the artist, to his greater convenience, to carry out the work in his own studio. The painting of "*The Great Fire of London*" was thus executed in Mr. Forbes' studio at Trewarveneth ; but before embarking on his design he spent much time in studying the details of architecture, costume, etc., necessary to his task,

among the prints and old books of the British Museum.

The year 1897 having been given over to painting "The Great Fire of London," which from its mere size and all other difficulties of its execution proved a somewhat exhausting work, Mr. and Mrs. Forbes were glad to accord themselves something of a holiday, and so betook themselves to the Pyrenees, making their first stop at St. Jean de Luz. The chief incidents of that trip have already been recorded in the chapter dealing with the work of Mrs. Forbes; but it will be well here to refer to the chief works of Mr. Forbes in the Basque country: "The Bridge of Ascain," a charming composition, in which the vigorous curve of the old stone bridge rises nobly above the rocky river-bed, the sparse stream trickling between; and a larger picture, "L'Attelage Basque," in which he has seized upon one of the most typical incidents of the country, the slow passing-by of one of those ponderous ox-waggons laden with dry bracken from the mountain sides, which with the creaking of their wooden wheels and the monotonous, but not unmusical, cry of the driver, descend continually the narrow mountain roads to the villages below. It is interesting to note how the same spectacle has kindled the imagination of limner on canvas and word-painter alike. For some time after the completion of "L'Attelage Basque" Mr. Forbes was greatly struck with the following passage in Pierre Loti's "Ramuntcho," a pathetic and exquisitely observed romance of the Basque country:

"Très lentes, par les chemins de montagne, s'en allaient ces charges énormes de



THE BRIDGE OF ASCAIN.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.
By Permission of Mrs. Foster.

fougères ; très lentes, avec des tintements de clochettes, les bœufs attelés, indolents et forts ; coiffés tous de la traditionnelle peau de mouton, couleur de bête fauve, qui leur donne l'air de bisons ou d'aurochs, traînaient ces chariots lourds, dont les roues sont des disques pleins, comme celle des chars antiques. Les bouviers, le long bâton à la main, marchaient devant, toujours sans bruit, en espadrilles, la chemise de coton rose découvrant la poitrine, la veste jetée à l'épaule gauche, et le beret de laine très enfoncé sur une face rasée, maigre, grave, à laquelle la largeur des mâchoires et des muscles du cou donne une expression de solidité massive."

Although chronologically out of place, it may be well to mention here "A Red Room in Holland"; a picture small in size, but very beautiful in tone and in its rendering of the discreet charm of a Dutch interior; the fruit, with several other works, of a visit to Holland in 1894. These pictures, the result of foreign travel, prove that the artist is far from inappreciative of the fascination, the wealth of picturesque charm, which lie over-seas. But to his understanding, kindly and bounteous Nature has condensed so much of beauty within a little space, that the honest endeavour to grasp and hold that fraction is enough for one man's life.

To return to his Cornish work, his pictures of the last five years may, to a certain extent, be classified as, firstly, pictures of incident, such as "The Letter"—an old postman, by the light of his bull's-eye lantern, laboriously making out the superscription on some missive from a far land ; while the expectant family

press together at their cottage door, the lamp-light from within on their eager faces. "The 22nd January, 1902," and "A Story of the Veldt," two interiors: in the one, heads are bent above a newspaper, in which is written that the great Victorian Era has come to its close; in the other, the glad-hearted, women of the old homestead hang on the words of the wounded and khaki-clad soldier. "Christmas Eve," a larger work, may perhaps be included in this category. There is a touch of quaint humour in this picture. Here in this street of old Penzance no snow lies on the ground, but the wet pavement shines, as the lamps are lighted in the little shops. A group of soaked musicians perform, lugubriously enough, on their brazen instruments; the orange vendor bawls his wares down the street. It is a study of *genre*, very far removed from conventional sentiment.

A picture of 1904 is "A Rescue at Dawn," in which, as has rarely been the case with Stanhope Forbes, a dramatic incident is chosen. It is a tale of suffering and suspense relieved at last with the first gleam of daylight for which St. Paul longed, and with him all creatures shipwrecked in the night. Helpless, fainting women and children droop in the grasp of their deliverers, who carry them through the water from the boat, the figures darkly silhouetted against a sullen sea and a sky just brightening to the smile of day.

The study for this picture, which is here reproduced, shows how the composition and arrangement of the group of figures of which it consists was evolved. (See facing p. 104.)

It is a characteristic example of the painter's



L'ATTELAGE BASQUE.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of R. T. Preston, Esq.

method, showing how the first conception of the general lines of his composition is quickly expressed and how with the rough but vigorous execution which his charcoal affords, he notes down the broad effects of tone, the balance of the masses, the swing and action of the figures.

It was in the autumn of this year that an honour was conferred upon Stanhope Forbes of which he is justly proud. It was with infinite pleasure he learnt that at their last election the Institute of France had chosen him as *correspondant* in succession to the late G. F. Watts. To succeed so great and honoured a painter was in itself a distinction in which he might well take pride. But there was something particularly gratifying to the artist in the bestowal of so marked a distinction by his *confrères* of that country, to which he was, indeed, closely bound and attached by ties of birth and no less by early and happy associations.

Now we come to a class of work which might be described as "idylls of the road": subjects over which the painter and Lavengro might have shaken hands; figures found and drawn in their environment of woodland places; men and horses mirrored in quiet pools, such as in "The Drinking Place" and "Nomads"; the roadside church with the square tower, and walls centuries old, above which the rooks fly, and the ash-trees drop their yellow leaves, in "October"; and then "Lighting-up Time" (*see facing p. 110*), in which the jaded horse and the tired family pause in the gathering gloom, on the moorland road.

Of this picture, Mr. Wilfred Meynell has written so sympathetically that perhaps we may be permitted to turn to him again: "The evening has its local colour. It is not dusk merely; it is the dusk of Cornwall—the county's very own; charged, therefore, with memories and meanings for all who ever 'trod the skirts of the eventide' in those romantic parts. One such, seeing that picture amid the common ruck of Academy pictures, was instantly arrested; a Cornish holiday of his youth came back to him, with all his own broodings under that brooding sky."

In "Round the Camp Fire" Mr. Forbes has put all his strength into the masterly rendering of the firelit faces. Painted with a full brush and a vibrant sense of colour, he has yet, from the point of view of character studies, never done anything better than these strongly marked heads bending towards the light from out of the gloom of the dark blue night beyond.

Lastly, we must return with him to his old love, the harbour with its swinging boats. Seen either from out at sea, with the smoke of the village and the sombre green of the steep fields for background, or else seen from the cliff itself, with all the varying effects of light on the Bay—silver-grey or azure-blue, or golden with the light of evening: And looking back across the years, from "The Seine Boat," "Off to Skibbereen," "Whiffing," and "Home-along," to "The Fish Sale" and "Off to the Fishing Ground," one can see how the painter has progressed along the road. His technique, always sincere, may in these earlier works have lain open to the charge



CHARCOAL STUDY FOR "A RESCUE AT DAWN"

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

of an excessive formality, his brush-work too precise, his colour sad and over-restrained. Here he shows a sense more emancipated of the joy of his medium, and a delight in familiar things, seen not prosaically but transfigured by the alchemy of the sun-magician. More especially in "Home-along" (*see facing p. 112*) has he rendered the glamour of the last and rarest light of the day, when the glassy, responsive water gives back the gold of the sky; and the humble folk of every day walk with the last radiance of the fading light on their shoulders and their hair; and the commonplace is merged and lost in the solemn unity of the gathering night.

Keeping, as he does, in the love of his art, the most large-minded of enthusiasms, quick to appreciate and applaud all that is fine and lastingly convincing in the newest work of his contemporaries of all lands, with a temperament singularly freed from artistic jealousies, he brings continually to his own work the open mind of the student. Not content to harp on the same theme, and repeat his own successes, he strives towards the more complete presentment of the simple, lovable, old-world side of life which appeals to him.

Mallock has said, "The true catholic use of poetry is not so much to make one admire the poetry of poems, as to make one perceive the poetry of life"; and may it not be said of a picture which interprets the sentiment and the pictorial quality of things often passed unnoticed, that it fulfils most completely the catholic end of Art?

CHAPTER IX.

THE FORBES SCHOOL AT NEWLYN.

OCTOBER, 1899, saw the inauguration of a new development in the Art history of Newlyn, which, small in its beginnings, has since grown into considerable importance. Times had changed in the village; the ranks of the original colony of painters had, through one cause and another, become woefully thinned. The once busy studios, which had witnessed the creation of "The Hopeless Dawn," the "Alleluia!" and "The Last Blessing," stood empty, or were reverting to their first utility as carpenters' shops or net-lofts.

That painter of charming pastorals, and brilliant caricaturist, Mr. Fred Hall, had withdrawn his talents to another field. There was restlessness in the air, and only a few seemed loth to put forth from their old moorings.

That the long sojourn of Mr. and Mrs. Forbes in Southern France might be the precursor to a definite move on their part seemed also to be within the limits of probability. But nothing was further from the ideas of the painter who had long ago determined, so far as lay within his power, to conquer all the artistic possibilities of the place he had chosen, and to that extent made his own.

A man's only chance of success, he argues, lies both in the recognition of his own limitations, and in pushing his assured capabilities



A RESCUE AT DAWN.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

to their furthest point. Many writers, poets, painters, have found that their best work is done when they are recording rapid notes of travel, in fixing the fugitive charm of impressions caught on the wing. But for others it is best that they should wrest the inward core of meaning from their subject only by more deliberate methods; and how strongly this was felt by Mr. Forbes he has himself told in his address read at Falmouth in 1900, and already quoted.

No two people could have felt keener regret than did Mr. and Mrs. Forbes, as from one reason of expediency or the other, they saw their old friends deserting the little colony, where the years had gone by so quickly and so pleasantly. Some were crossing the "big water" to their Transatlantic homes; others had turned Benedick, and were about to adventure on life and activity in a large city. A grasp of the hand, and one watched the speeding train whirl them from the station out into the larger world, with the sense that the gap they had left would not readily be filled.

But more than this was needed to make Mr. Forbes relinquish his fixed determination to remain where he had planted his flag. But, on the other hand, it is not good for man to be alone, above all in the artistic profession, where wits are kept bright by constant rubbing against each other. So, if the old friends will go, new ones must come, said Mr. Forbes; and, casting about for the best expedient to bring fresh vitality into the place, he determined to follow the example of many of the greater artists of France, and to throw open a studio to all who would care to enrol themselves

as his pupils. Such a course had already been adopted with conspicuous success by another well-known member of the Academy—a course that was maintained until the flight of twenty years had brought with it change of ideas and development in new directions; but here, in a remote corner of England, it was an experiment, and not begun, as one can well imagine, without some hesitation. But that it was an experiment which has brought its own justification will surely be admitted by any who know the busy little hive which is the artistic Newlyn of to-day.

There are few pursuits more fascinating than that of addressing one's own intelligence to another, alive with the quick perception of youth. Often the teacher learns in teaching; his own insight is kindled in the effort to make clear his thought to another; and though again and again he may meet with discouragement, and feel his own clear judgment strive and fall back broken against the dead wall of preconceived prejudice and false training, given sufficient faith in himself, enthusiasm, and patience, sooner or later the joy is his of finding that the seed cast on apparently stony ground is beginning to bring forth its clear, fresh growth.

"All we can do for you," say Mr. and Mrs. Forbes to their pupils, "is to set you on the path, to show you how to avoid the errors, the false starts that we ourselves made in our time, to help you to grasp those broad first principles which must underlie every work of art. Learn to draw, learn to grip your subject as a whole in its big lines and masses,



CHARCOAL STUDY FOR "A RESCUE AT DAWN."

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

learn to *see*, and then good luck to you ! Then the time has come when you can begin to develop your own *espécial idiosyncrasies*. We don't want you to adopt our methods, only in so far as the simplicity and directness of procedure, which we have evolved as best for ourselves, is likely to be the best in helping you to reach your ends without circuitous doublings. Far from forcing our own technique on you, we want you to use your own brains, to try experiments, to observe and weigh in the balance the work of painters of the widest diversity of style, to keep your intelligence alert, to so train the hand that it may swiftly and subtly respond to the trained eye." That Mr. Forbes has patience, and does not neglect the homeliest advice to those he wishes to instruct, his address to his students at the close of the first term will show. "Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry," has been proved to be the principle underlying all successful generalship. "Have faith in the worthiness of the end to be achieved, and neglect no apparently trivial detail which may help or wreck your work," is the motto which Mr. and Mrs. Forbes seek to impress on their students, and which is embodied in the following extract from Mr. Forbes' valedictory address at the end of the first five months of work :

"My wife and I, in this the opening term of our school, have thought it advisable to lead you all to devote your energies mainly to the study of Drawing, knowing that there lies the great initial difficulty. We are convinced that the numerous studies which you have done under our direction with that most

serviceable of weapons; a stick of charcoal, will more than repay you.

"It may have seemed scarcely so amusing as splashing about with a paint-box, but the qualities which go to produce a satisfactory charcoal drawing are well-nigh indispensable, and are moreover the foundation upon which the best work rests. Whether you intend to work in oil, in water-colour, or in any other medium; whether you intend to paint pictures or to restrict yourselves to black and white work, there is no sounder training than this; and whatever the work may be that you have in hand, there is no better preliminary study than a good charcoal sketch.

"I am quite sure that after making so many rapid studies in a space of time which we have purposely limited, you have gained vastly in ability to draw correctly and quickly.

"In criticising your work I have found it necessary to perhaps harp a good deal on one string, and I sometimes wonder how often I have used the expression 'Make it simpler' in my round of inspection. But, indeed, I do not think that I can have dinned this into your ears too often, or impressed this upon you too strongly. Over and over again, on comparing the studies with the model before me, the same feeling has come over me. Nature is so severely simple, so reticent and modest in form and colour, and so entirely unobtrusive, that the invariable tendency is towards overinsistence and exaggeration. Do not think that I fail to realise the difficulty of obtaining this most valuable of all qualities—breadth or simplicity. No student need feel discouraged at failing to attain that which baffles the most



LIGHTING-UP TIME.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

By Permission of Signor Van Biele, Genoa.

experienced of painters. The power of emphasising the big facts, of grasping the masses and realising the thing before you in a large spirit—this is indeed one of the greatest of all qualities, and it is this which, above all, puts the stamp on the work of a master.

“But the student, if he cannot hope to attain the full power, can at least aim in the right direction. Nature is so infinite we can but note down a mere fraction of the facts the eye can see. Take care, therefore, to seize those which are important: the swing or action, the tone and balance of light and shade, the proportions, the masses. There are plenty of such important facts, and when you have mastered them you are at liberty to turn your attention to countless minor details.

“Do not think I am urging you to scamp your work, to leave anything out, to neglect detail often full of interest and charm; I merely ask you to take things in their proper order, and to give precedence to the truths that carry the greatest weight. You may perhaps ask how is this sense of breadth, this feeling of simplicity, to be cultivated? I think only as with everything else—by hard work, and by bearing the principle constantly in mind, and never losing sight of its supreme importance.

“Another great principle which I hope I have to some extent succeeded in impressing upon you is that of strict fidelity to nature. And by this I imply a great deal more than you might at first think was meant. Truth is a very subtle thing indeed—not easy to seize upon, nor ready to be caught.

“You must not persuade yourself that

you have done the job when you have got what the French call '*un à peu près*'; that is no use at all, or, if anything, worse than useless. Search nature thoroughly, and get at the heart of things. It is not enough to convey something of the character of the model, to get a kind of general likeness, an approximation to the drawing, tone, and colour : every line, every tone, you must study, and that thoroughly. Never mind if you rub out your drawing a dozen times, or if you take ten minutes mixing a tone, so long as you get it right ; but don't be satisfied until you have it exact. Remember too how one part acts upon another. You can never falsify one thing without throwing out more or less all the rest ; so do not imagine that it is of no consequence, because you do it wilfully and with your eyes open. 'Oh, I could have got it right if I wanted, only I made it so intentionally,' etc. A loose habit of observation once acquired is very hard to shake ; it grows most insidiously, until one loses all accuracy. No quality on the other hand tells more than thoroughness, or adds so much to the convincing nature of one's work.

"We can, I think;—in Newlyn congratulate ourselves on the excellent models we are able to obtain ; but even had the subjects which we have arranged for you been less amusing and attractive, I would still have bade you adhere rigidly to what is set before you, and I sincerely hope that if you have absorbed anything of this principle you will not shake it off when you pass outside the door of the studio, but apply it just as earnestly in whatever your work may be. Nature is hard to beat : I



HOME ALONG.

By Stanhope A. Forbes, A.R.A.

adjure you to approach her with reverence, and to take what she gives you and be contented. Fear not that you will kill your imagination and curb your fancy. If indeed you possess these most precious of all gifts, you will not so easily keep them in restraint.

"By all means experiment, and try everything if you have time. But there are some things that are not open to argument, and which I cannot pass. You certainly never will paint unless you give yourselves a fair chance, with a sufficiency of colour and decent implements.

"The ill-stretched canvas, the carelessly set palette with its half-dried old bits of paint, the dirty, badly washed brushes—all these must go, and in their places let us see proper workmanlike tools, so that at least you start fair. Carelessness is not an artistic virtue; but just because the artist's temperament is rather prone to this fault, you should guard against it in your methods. Ten minutes spent occasionally in cleaning up, in putting the brushes in order, and resetting the palette, will sometimes do more than an hour's work on a picture which may be getting in a muddle through the fault of the paint-box rather than of its owner.

"Now, as to methods of painting; why, there are plenty of them, and perhaps the only safe advice is that the more simple and direct the method the better.

"In whatever medium you may elect to work, the straight, direct path is the one to choose. Have nothing to do with tricks, with dodges and devices; and if anyone tells you of some infallible recipe for producing an

effect or obtaining some wonderful result, turn a deaf ear to it. Look nature in the face, think only of it, and try to realise some of its beauty, its charm."

Should anyone unaccustomed to Mr. Forbes' methods of training pay a passing visit to the class-room, the apparent roughness, the superficial crudity and lack of "finish" in the studies would probably come as something of a shock. But were the stranger to remain and listen to the criticisms, he would find the teachers reiterating, with patient insistence, under different forms of speech, "Look long at the model; form in your own mind a clear picture of the swing of his figure, his proportions, the length and the breadth of him. Make that quite clear to yourself, and then drive ahead." Look at that head, that coat, those hands, and see them as masses of colour, their shape only defined by the shape of the other masses of colour that they are seen against. There is no such thing in nature as a conventional outline." "True outline is the shorthand of the accomplished draughtsman: look at these outlines of Holbein—tense as a bent bow, and true as an arrow shot from the string; he held and felt the solid form as the modeller grips his lump of clay." "See that face, clear-cut as a cameo against the dark background; get your background colour true and the right shape, and your face will paint itself more nearly than you can imagine." "Try to realise that the four sides of your paper or canvas are the four edges of a frame, within which you must place your picture with an eye to the balance of parts."

Alas! it all sounds so easy when spoken,

and so hard to carry out ! The student tries, and fails, and tries again. No wonder that superficial finish is laid aside as he strives with tentative hand and unaccustomed eye after the big principles which underlie the triumphs of a Velasquez ! But at last, out of the depths of his floundering and despair, he begins to feel his feet on solid ground : he begins to see ; and though far, far from his ideal, glimpses of the fair land of artistic possibilities begin for him. Then say his teachers :

"Go further ; carry on your picture till you run the risk of spoiling it. Go to the masterpieces of consummate detail. Hold your breath before a Holbein or a Van Eyck ; but see how all this wealth of elaboration is held in check by a wise and austere simplicity. Remember that these men saw the big things first !"

The teachers at the Stanhope Forbes school spare no pains in endeavouring to lead their students away from hide-bound conventions, and to help them to see accustomed things freshly. A cast of a Donatello angel is a thing of beauty, to be set out of doors where the green of the sunlit grass can be reflected into its whiteness against a background of shimmering leaves. Arrangements of the model are sought for in varied effects, far other than those of the stereotyped north light of the conventional studio. In summer, the students are often seen dotted about in the big sunshiny garden which surrounds the classrooms, making studies of the masses of bloom as they grow under the open sky ; and on fine afternoons a ring of easels surrounds the model, posed out of doors on a grassy plateau.

Then, when the long nights of winter begin, the students are encouraged to attempt all sorts of amusing "arrangements," Mr. and Mrs. Forbes sometimes joining in, and working with their pupils side by side. That this stimulating system is a successful one, their brother artists cordially testify. Most gratifying has been their appreciation of the work accomplished, when, at the end of each term, a little "*concours*" is held, the students electing a committee among themselves, to select and arrange round the walls of the studio the best of the work which has been executed during the preceding months. So much of fresh and vigorous promise has, at each succeeding exhibition been found among it, that the teachers are encouraged to look for no inconsiderable fruition of their labours in the coming years. And the influence of the school is likely to be widespread; for besides the larger proportion of the students from near home, many have come out of far lands—from Australia, from China and Chili; from the southern and the northernmost parts of Europe; from India and Canada and New Zealand. May they all keep in their future lives a good memory of their Alma Mater, by the shore of the Cornish sea!

Among the older painters of the colony who look on at the work with sympathetic interest, Mr. and Mrs. Forbes feel that they owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. George Sherwood Hunter, an artist of sincere and thoughtful individuality who is always ready to help and supplement the teachers' efforts. His own studio, situated in the same garden or "meadow," as it is called, where are Mr. Forbes' class-rooms, is a per-

fect treasure-house of beautiful and interesting work. Pictures rarely seen in exhibitions—for he loves to keep them about him—but most stimulating to the young artists whenever they are privileged to look through the rich store of sketches and large completed pictures brought back from many lands, from Palestine and Spain, the dim richly coloured interiors of Breton churches, and the quaint and profoundly studied types of Dutch peasantry.

And outside the meadow gates are other studios, where another, younger "Newlyn School," in the sense in which the term was first applied, is springing up. This is evident to any who find their way to the bright little picture gallery which the artists owe to the generosity of Mr. Passmore Edwards. Side by side with those pioneers of the colony who remain—the water-colourists whose work has long been welcomed at the Institute and all the larger exhibitions—and together with the delicate impressions and notes of travel of that most *raffiné* and fastidious of realists, Mr. Norman Garstin, hangs the work of two young men who have perhaps still their spurs to win, but which is instinct with vitality and charm. Of both it is not too much to say that they are artists of whom their native town, Penzance, will one day be proud. One, a seeker after delicate tone harmonies, of poetic and fertile imagination, is a pupil of Stanhope Forbes; the other a painter of the life of every day, but seen through the medium of the most sympathetic observation, is a pupil of Norman Garstin. And the charm of moorland, and woodland, and hill finds its worthy

exponents, notably at the hands of a young Lancastrian, who has so lost his heart to the intimate charm of one Cornish valley that he has appropriated its pretty designation to himself, adding it to his own more every-day cognomen.

And as the ways of seeking after beauty are many—in a quiet little quadrangle round a flower-set court, in studios under the windows of which the surf dashes up and breaks—one finds the flashing beauty of sapphire and topaz and amethyst in the enamels of Mr. Dick; and the ring of hammer on beaten metal, as copper and silver and brass are fashioned into forms of quaint and beautiful design under the direction of Mr. J. D. Mackenzie.

And so Newlyn keeps its cheery life of mutual help and good-fellowship. Of Stanhope Forbes, one of the earliest of its recruits, it is not too much to say that he is more enamoured of the charm of his chosen village than ever. To those who have followed the evolution of his artistic output, it is evident from his later work that he has by no means as yet spoken his last word. His sense of colour grows more full, his technique less formal and more supple. A friend came on him suddenly not long ago in the late evening, at work in the village among the gaily painted little shops when the first lights are beginning to glow from within.

"Isn't it lovely!" he cries, with the enthusiasm of a boy. "Look at that brand-new grocery shop: it is perfectly hideous by day, but look at the tone of it now against the sky. You may do what you like, but you can't spoil Nature; you may try your hardest, but she

won't 'be beaten in her determination to be beautiful!" And so, the last possible gleam of daylight over, the painter stoops to pick up his tools.

"I can mind you pentin' down here-along twenty years ago, Mr. Forbes. Ain't you tired of it yet?" says a burly old fisherman who had been watching operations.

And the painter laughs as he picks up his kit, and climbs to his home at the top of the hill.

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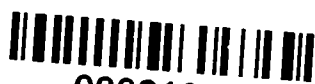
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